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BIBLICAL THINGS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.

A Collection of Facts, Notes, and Information

CONCERNING MUCH THAT IS
RARE, QUAINT, CURIOUS, OBSCURE, AND LITTLE KNOWN
IN RELATION TO BIBLICAL SUBJECTS.

SECOND SERIES.

(*With Indices to the complete work.*)

by
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PREFACE TO SECOND SERIES.

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IN the preparation of this Second Series of “Biblical Things Not Generally Known” some very curious works have been examined, the productions of many great Continental writers have been consulted, and much out-of-the-way information has been secured, which, it is hoped, will sustain the interest felt in the preceding Series.

Especial attention has been paid to early legends and traditions which seemed to throw light on the Sacred Word; and to ideas associated with idolatrous worship, which might be usefully compared with the fuller revelation in the Divine worship. Concerning these paragraphs it may be necessary to state that they are not given as being true and trustworthy, but as indicating the thoughts of men on Bible topics, and as presenting suggestive contrasts with the authoritative Scripture narratives.

Effort has been made to secure the illustration of passages from every part of the Word, but the early Mosaic revelation, the prophetical Scriptures, and the Gospels, have naturally received the chief attention. Space has not permitted the dealing with “Difficult Texts” so fully as might have been desired, but this department yields sufficient material for a separate volume, and its extended treatment would involve a departure from the principle on which this work has been prepared. A volume devoted to the treatment of difficult texts is in preparation which will form an appropriate

companion to the present work. Books of travel in other Eastern countries have yielded many paragraphs giving accounts of manners and customs, animals and plants, similar to those mentioned in Scripture ; and also especially interesting sections giving details of curious religious rites and festivals in heathen lands.

The reader may again be reminded that no opinions are expressed in this work ; it professes to be a collection of facts (or representations of what appear to be facts) that must be regarded as more or less trustworthy. Where the detail is one of mere observation the facts stated may be accepted, and the authority is not given. In cases that seemed to be doubtful, or conflicting with the statements of others, or apparently extraordinary and exaggerated, the name of the authority has usually been indicated.

The interests of the Bible Student, the Sunday-School Teacher, and the Preacher have been steadily kept in view, and careful and complete indices will be found at the end of the present volume which embrace the subjects treated of in both the first and second series of the work, putting the contents of the *entire* work at their easy command. But while in the most useful and suggestive way *Side-helps* are thus given towards the understanding and the teaching of the Sacred Word, it should not be forgotten that they are only Side-helps, and that the Book of gracious Divine revelations contains deep spiritual mysteries which no mere customs or analogies can interpret or explain, and which can only be “spiritually discerned.”

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

FOR the convenience of indexing the paragraphs of this "Second Series" in the margin of Teachers' Bibles, and to save confusion in making references to this work, the numbers of the paragraphs have been continued from the "First Series." When complete, the work will be found to contain illustrations of all parts of the Sacred Word. Strict classification did not seem advisable, but careful indexes will put the whole contents at the ready command of the Bible Student.

BIBLICAL THINGS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN.

540.—AARON'S BLESSING.—*Num. vi. 24—26.*

This was uttered by the Jewish priests in a standing posture, with their hands lifted up, and their faces turned towards the assembly. When it was used in the sanctuary, the blessing was pronounced in its entire state, without a pause, the people preserving profound silence ; but in the synagogues the priest divided it into three parts, making a distinct pause at the end of each verse ; and the people saying with a loud voice, Amen.

The Jewish tradition is, that this blessing was pronounced at the close of the daily sacrifice. The form of the blessing requires attention. There are three parts, to each sentence the Holy Name, Jehovah, stands as nominative, and its climax is that *peace* which is the last and best gift of God to His people. It contains twelve words, excluding the sacred Name, as if in some way to represent the twelve tribes making up Jehovah's people. The name *Jehovah* was used in the sanctuary, but Maimonides says that "it has never been used, even in the solemn benediction of the sanctuary, since the death of Simon the Just."

In the modern synagogues, they that are of the family of Aaron go up to the steps which lead to the place where the book of the law is kept, and, lifting up their hands, pronounce the blessing upon the assembly ; and they still observe the ancient custom which, they say, was not only to lift up and spread their hands, but then to join them together by the thumbs and two forefingers, dividing the others from them. When the blessing is pronounced, all the people cover their faces, under the impression that they would be struck blind if they should look up. The Divine Majesty, they imagine, rests upon the hands of the priest while he is blessing the people ; and this impression of the presence of God as in the midst of them, infuses a deep solemnity into their minds.

541.—THE SYMBOL OF THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT.
Daniel viii. 3—10.

These symbols were chosen as those which were accepted as national emblems of certain kingdoms. Persia was of old represented by a ram. Ammianus Marcellinus states that the King of Persia wore a ram's head of gold, set with precious stones, instead of a diadem. The type of a ram is seen on ancient Persian coins; and travellers have observed that rams' heads, with horns of unequal height, are still to be seen sculptured on the pillars of Persepolis. The goat was equally the acknowledged symbol of Macedonia. For the first colony of that country, being directed by the oracle to take a goat for a guide, followed a flock of these animals, and built a city where they stopped, which was called *Ægeæ*, from *Ægus*, a goat, and the people themselves took the title of *Ægeadæ*. Figures of a goat with a single horn are found on ancient Macedonian monuments; and at Persepolis the subjection of the Macedonians to the Persians, in the reign of Amyntas, B.C. 547, is represented by a man in Persian dress holding by the single horn an animal of this kind. A gem engraved in the Florentine collection represents a goat's and a ram's head joined together, symbolising the union of the Persian and Macedonian Kingdoms. This was probably engraved after the conquest of Persia by Alexander.

542.—THE UNKNOWN GOD OF THE SAMARITANS.
John iv. 22.

Without some adequate reason for his doing so we can hardly imagine our Lord saying so distinctly to the Samaritan woman, "Ye worship *ye know not what*." Most worshippers have some knowledge of their deity; he is at least fixed in their minds by some name or title; but the Samaritans were really in doubt as to the object of their worship. The expression used by our Lord is illustrated by a letter of the Samaritans preserved by Josephus.

"To King Antiochus, the god Epiphanes (he reigned from about B.C. 174 to B.C. 164), a memorial from the Sidonians, who live at Shechem. Our forefathers, upon certain frequent plagues, and as following a certain ancient superstition, had a custom of observing that day which by the Jews is called the Sabbath. And, when they had erected a temple on the mountain called *Gerizim*, though without a name, they offered upon it the altar?) the proper sacrifices. Now, upon the just treat-

ment of these wicked Jews—(Antiochus was at the time in possession of Jerusalem, and venting his cruelty upon the people)—those that manage their affairs, supposing that we were kin to them, and practised as they do, make us liable to the same accusations, although we were originally Sidonians, as is evident from the public records. We therefore beseech thee, our benefactor and Saviour, to give order to Apollonius, the governor of this part of the country, and to Nicenor, the procurator of thy affairs, to give us no disturbance, nor to lay to our charge what the Jews are accused for, since we are aliens from their nation, and from their customs ; but let our temple, *which at present hath no name at all*, be named the temple of Jupiter Hellenius. If this were once done, we should no longer be disturbed, but should be more intent on our own occupation with quietness, and so bring a greater revenue to thee."

Such is the letter as given by Josephus. It may possibly be true : but the historian was a bitter enemy of the Samaritans, and his statement needs to be received with caution. If the letter is genuine, it well illustrates the truth of Christ's words. The temple was without a name, and the people worshipped there any God that policy or caprice recommended.

543.—DAYSMAN.—*Job ix. 33.*

This is a peculiar term for an umpire, one empowered by mutual consent to argue and decide a cause between two parties. It is suggested that he may be called a *daysman* because his presence was required in court at the day appointed, the *dies dictus* of the trial. The word may be illustrated by a passage in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, ii. 8. In the combat between Prince Arthur and the two Paynim brothers who had despoiled Sir Guyon, Cymochles insultingly asks the prince :—

“ What art thou
That mak'st thyself his *daysman* to prolong
The vengeance prest ? ”

In the Heb. the term used is a *hiphil* form of *Yucach*, to be bright ; and in this form it means, to *make* bright or clear, and so, to *argue*. It is therefore a di-judicator between two parties, and is exactly the word used by the indignant Jacob to Laban in Gen. xxxi. 37 : “ Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge between us both.”

544.—MODERN HIGH PLACES.—*1 Kings xv. 14, etc.*

The difficulty of understanding what the “High Places” were, which are so frequently mentioned in the later Jewish history, makes interesting any descriptions we may now obtain of similar centres of worship. Writing of the Fellahin, now residing in Palestine, Lieutenant Conder says : “ Their religion is professedly Mohammedan, yet you may live for months in the country without seeing a mosque, or hearing the call to prayer. In place of the mosque is the Mukàm, or High Place. It consists of a little building of modern masonry, some ten feet square, with a round dome carefully whitewashed, and a *Mihrab*, or praying place on the south wall. The *Mukam* represents the real religion of the peasant ; it is sacred ; it serves as a depository of valuable articles which no one would steal from its revered protection ; it is guarded by the civil sheik of the village, or by a dervish ; votive offerings are made to the saint ; sacrifices are offered, and processions made to the shrine ; the trees round the spot are sacred. The shrines are often sacred to Christian saints, such as Bulus, Budrus, or Metta, i.e. Paul, Peter, or Matthew. There are others sacred to the patriarchs, to Noah, Shem, Ham, and even Seth ; and there are others again sacred to well-known historical characters, such as the companions of the prophet : in fact, the *Mukams* are catholic in their comprehensive embrace.”

545.—DIVINATION BY THE LIVER.—*Ezek. xxi. 21.*

The liver was the portion of the intestines of a sacrificial animal which diviners chiefly inspected. So important did the augurs account this part of the victim, that their attention was directed to it in the first instance, and if it appeared very unhealthy, no observations were made on the other parts, as it was judged unnecessary, the omen being accounted decidedly unfavourable. If the liver exhibited its natural healthy colour and condition, or if it was double, or there were two livers, and if the lobes inclined inwards, the signs were highly favourable, and success in any proposed object was deemed to be insured ; but nothing but dangers and misfortunes were foreboded when there was too much dryness, or a band between the parts, or if it was without a lobe, and still more when the liver itself was wanting, which is said to have sometimes happened. The omens were likewise considered full of evil when the liver had any blisters or ulcers ; if it was hard, thin, or dis-

coloured ; had any humour upon it : or if, in boiling, it became soft, or was displaced. The signs which appeared on the concave part of the liver concerned the family of the person offering the sacrifice ; but those on the gibbous side affected his enemies ; if either of these parts were shrivelled, corrupted, or in any unsound, the omen was unfortunate, but the reverse when it appeared sound and large.

546.—WASHING THE HANDS OFT.—*Mark vii. 3.*

Before eating some sorts of food more washings were required by the rabbis than for others. Before bread was eaten, the hands must be washed with care, but dry fruits might be eaten with unwashed hands. If a person, otherwise clean, touched any part of the Scriptures, he was not allowed to eat till he had washed his hands. The reason assigned for this was, that possibly the books, which often had been laid up in secret places, might have been gnawed by mice, or other vermin. “Divers washings” are mentioned by the Apostle Paul among other ceremonial rites to which the Jews adhered with the greatest tenacity. To illustrate the scrupulousness of the Pharisees in the matter of purifications, it is related of a certain rabbi, who was imprisoned in a dungeon with a very scanty allowance of food and water, that one day a part of his allowance of water having been accidentally spilled, he chose rather to hazard his perishing with thirst than to drink what was left, and omit his usual purifications.

It is curious to find that the Jewish washing customs passed over into the early Christian Church. In the *atrium*, or outer court which led to the interior of the church, there was commonly a fountain or a cistern of water for the people to wash their hands and face before they entered the church. Eusebius and Chrysostom make frequent allusions to this custom. The minister among the primitive Christians washed his hands before consecrating the elements in the Lord’s Supper. Cyril, of Jerusalem, speaks of the deacon bringing water to the bishop, and presbyters standing about the altar to wash their hands.

547.—DUTY MEASURED BY ABILITY.—*Luke xii. 48.*

In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* it is recorded of Socrates that, “when he offered small sacrifices from his small means, he thought that he was not at all inferior in merit to those who offered numerous and great sacrifices from ample and abundant means ; for he said that it would not become the gods to delight

in large rather than in small sacrifices ; since, if such were the case, the offerings of the bad would oftentimes be more acceptable to them than those of the good ; nor would life be of any account in the eyes of men, if oblations from the bad were better received by the gods than oblations from the good ; but he thought that the gods had most pleasure in the offerings of the most pious. He used also to quote with approbation the verse, ‘Perform Sacrifices to the Gods according to your Ability,’ and used to say that it was a good exhortation to men with regard to friends, and guests, and all other relations of life, to *perform according to their ability.*”

548—THE MISTAKE OF WANTING A KING.

1 Sam. viii. 5, 19, 20.

Bishop Wordsworth very skilfully explains the nature of the mistake made by the people of Israel in desiring a king to reign over them. Such a desire does not seem in itself unreasonable ; but the constitution, the covenant, and the work in the world, of that particular people, made such a request, at such a time, and in such a way, wholly wrong.

“It was God’s design that Israel in due time should have a king. God had promised to Abraham and to Jacob that kings should arise from them (Gen. xviii. 6, 16 ; xxxv. 11), and Jacob had foretold that ‘the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came,’ in whom it was to be settled for ever ; and Balaam had prophesied that ‘a sceptre should arise out of Israel,’ and God Himself had been pleased to give laws preparatory to the establishment, and for the better regulation of it. (Deut. xvii. 14, 20.)

“The sin of Israel in the days of Samuel with regard to the kingdom consisted in not waiting for God’s time, in which He might think fit to give them a king. It consisted in antedating that season by a rude seizure and impatient grasp of human anticipation, and in asking for a king in order that they might be like other nations, and that *their king* might lead them forth to battle, and deliver them from their enemies—as if it was not a special privilege to be *unlike* other nations, in being directly under God’s rule ; and as if God had not always delivered them from their enemies, whenever they were obedient to Him !

“But God often accommodates and adjusts His doings to men’s devices, in order that they may see by experience how evil a thing it is to follow their own inclinations, instead of conforming to His will, and tarrying His leisure. So it was

with Israel. God gave them a king in compliance with their wish, a king endowed with many gifts and graces, and adapted, by his physical strength and prowess, to their carnal reliance on material force and support. The fair beginnings of Saul, his modesty, prudence, clemency, and success ; his subsequent degeneracy when he was elated by victory, and puffed up by his royal dignity ; his vain glory, self-confidence, and disobedience to God speaking to him first by Samuel, and next in a direct command from Himself ; his hypocrisy and formalism ; his rejection and desertion by God ; his visitation from an Evil Spirit ; his envy, hatred, and malignant persecution of David, his deliverer and benefactor, and even of his own son ; his desolation, distress, distraction, despondency, and despair ; his resort to the witch of Endor for counsel from Samuel when dead, whom he had disobeyed when living ; his shameful defeat by the Philistines, and his wretched death on Mount Gilboa by his own hand ; and the succession of David in his room—all these events are full of deep moral interest, and fraught with warning, admonition, and instruction, both in faith and practice."

Sooner or later, they who push before God, forcing their will into action apart from Divine direction, must come under most grievous and bitter penalties. The only proper attitude for men, or nations, to take is, *waiting on God, and waiting for Him.*

549.—TURKISH FEEDING CUSTOMS.—*Matt. xxvi. 23.*

Those customs which are now observed by residents in the East probably represent, with minute accuracy, the customs introduced to our notice in Bible narrative : and the descriptions of modern, social, and family life are therefore singularly helpful to our understanding of Scripture scenes. A recent traveller says, "Someone has observed that the mode of feeding is a great mark of a nation's culture. When it is understood that the Turks use neither knives nor forks, many would at once rank them with outer barbarians, but this would scarcely be just. Although food of all kinds, excepting soup, is carried to the mouth without any instruments but those which nature has supplied, still in other respects Turkish meals are conducted in a mode both cleanly and decent. A Turk on rising from his bed (which consists of mattresses laid on the floor, and afterwards rolled up in a cupboard), indulges in a pipe, and a tiny cup of black coffee. He does not eat

until about eleven o'clock, when a somewhat substantial breakfast is brought him, consisting of soup, bread, cheese, and a plate of hashed meat mixed with vegetables. This meal serves him till dinner, which is eaten about seven in the evening, and is substantial and well cooked. When dinner is announced, a servant brings in a metal ewer and basin, and pours water over the hands of the guests, presenting a towel, often prettily embroidered. A low sofa, or table, is then brought in, and upon this is placed a metal tray, on which are put spoons and pieces of bread. The first dish is a basin of soup, and each person dips his spoon into it, eating from what may be termed the soup-tureen. After this comes perhaps fish, then hashed meat and vegetables, then fowl, cooked so as to render its division easy. According to the wealth of the master of the house is the length of the feast, but in very moderate Turkish houses the dinners are somewhat elaborate, and they always end with *Pilaff*, the national dish, much more national than either the roast beef or plum pudding of the English, and as common as the macaroni of Naples. No wine is drunk during or after the repast; but on state occasions, as for example during the feast of Ramazan, some very delicious sherbets are handed round. We must not forget to add that at the close of the dinner, the servant comes round again with soap, water, and towels, the water being often warmed and scented. Coffee and pipes follow the dinner, with conversation, and the guests seem not unhappy but marvellously dull during the joyless evenings passed without the gentle and refining influence of the best part of creation."

550.—RATIFICATION OF A COVENANT BY A BURNING LAMP. *Gen. xv. 17.*

In illustration of this very ancient mode of ratifying a covenant, Roberts says, "It is an interesting fact that the burning lamp or fire is still used in the East in confirmation of a covenant. Should a person in the evening make a solemn promise to perform something for another, and should the latter doubt his word, the former will say, pointing to the flame of the lamp, 'That is the witness.' On occasions of greater importance, when two or more join in a covenant, should the fidelity of any be questioned, they will say, 'We invoke the lamp of the Temple.' When an agreement of this kind is broken, it will be said, 'Who would have thought this, for the lamp of the Temple was invoked.'"

551.—CURIOS REAPPEARANCE OF OLD BIBLE STORIES.
Jos. vi. 20, x. 12, 18.

The Fellahin of Palestine preserve the history of the past in queer, distorted legends, which mix together Ali, Joshua, Omar, Samson, Moses, Baldwin, the Apostles and the Evangelists, in wild incongruity. The following will suffice as a specimen :—

“The Bedáwin of the district have a well-known tradition regarding the site of Jiljúlieh. Over the coffee and pipes in the evening, after the day’s work was done, they related it to us. By the old tamarisk once stood the City of Brass, which was inhabited by Pagans. When Mohammed’s creed began to spread Aly, his son-in-law, ‘the lion of God,’ arrived at the city, and rode seven times round it on his horse Maimûn. The brazen walls fell down, destroyed by his breath, and the Pagans fled, pursued by the faithful towards Kuruntul ; but the day drew to a close, and darkness threatened to shield the infidels. Then Aly, standing on the hill which lies due east of the Kuruntul crag, called out to the sun, ‘Come back, O blessed one !’ And the sun returned in heaven, so that the hill has ever since been called ‘The Ridge of the Return.’ Here stands the Mukâm, or sacred station of Aly, and here also is the place where Belâl ibn Rubâh, the Muedhen of the Prophet, called the Faithful to prayer after the victory.

“Such is the legend. In it we see mixed up and assigned to the Aly ibn Abu Tâleb, and to Belâl ibn Rubâh, two episodes in the life of Joshua—the fall of Jericho and the battle of Aijalon.”—*Pub. Pal. Expl. Fund.*

552.—COMMENDATORY LETTERS.—*2 Cor. iii. 1.*

It appears that the rival and Judaizing teachers who so greatly troubled the apostle Paul, and injured his work, boasted of having letters of commendation from the church at Jerusalem, and asserted that Paul’s inability to show his credentials clearly proved that he was teaching without authority ; and this assertion evidently weakened Paul’s influence in the churches. The practice of sending such testimonials was already established. It was, indeed, the natural protection of a society yet in its infancy against the dangers to which it is exposed, against the tricks of impostors, the false teaching of heretics, the vices of evil-doers. Quite possibly letters of this kind had been in use among the scattered Jews, who thus maintained their unity as a people. Afterwards

the practice was fully established in the Christian Church. A bishop of any congregation, in any part of the empire, might commend a traveller, layman or cleric, to the good offices of any other. The precautions against imposture might, indeed, sometimes be insufficient; but as a rule it did its work, and served as a bond of union between all Christian churches. Wherever the Christian traveller went, provided with these letters, he found shelter and hospitality. The most remarkable testimony, however, to the extent and the usefulness of the practice is found in the wish of Julian to reorganise heathen society on the same plan, and to provide, in this way, shelter and food for any non-Christian traveller who might be journeying to a strange city.

553.—THE CLASSICAL IDEA OF HADES.—*Rev. i. 18.*

The Greek word *Hades*, in the New Testament, and the Hebrew word *Sheol*, in the Old Testament, are used in the most general sense to denote the state of the dead, including the grave as the residence of the body, and the world of spirits as the abode of the soul. The Hebrew idea of it is perhaps most fully given in Job x. 21, 22. But it may be interesting and useful to compare the pagan notions from which the word *Hades* is taken.

The name was given by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and especially by the poets, to Pluto, the god who was supposed to preside over the infernal regions. He is represented as being the son of Chronos and Rhea, the husband of Persephone, and the brother of Zeus and Poseidon. He bore the character of being a fierce, cruel, and inexorable tyrant, dreaded by mortals, who, when they invoked him, struck the earth with their hands, sacrificed black sheep in his honour, and in offering their sacrifices, stood with averted faces. The grim Hades shuts up the shades of the dead in his dark domains. His wife Persephone shared the throne of the lower world with her cruel husband. And not only did Hades rule over the infernal regions; he was considered also as the author of those blessings which spring from the earth, and more especially of those rich mineral treasures which are contained in the bowels of the earth.

554.—HANDS UPON THE HEAD.—*Jer. ii. 37.*

This is one of the most expressive of the Eastern modes of indicating sorrow and deep humiliation: and the same attitude is frequently met with on the paintings in the tombs of Egypt.

Mr. Roberts, referring to modern customs in the East, says :—“ When people are in great distress they put their hands on their head, the fingers being clasped on the top of the crown. Should a man who is plunged into wretchedness meet a friend, he immediately puts his hands on his head to illustrate his circumstances. When a person hears of the death of a relative or friend, he forthwith clasps his hands on his head. When boys have been punished at school, they run home with their hands on their head. Parents are much displeased and alarmed when they see their children with their hands in that position, because they look upon it not merely as a sign of grief, but as an emblem of bad fortune.”

The idea of the verse seems to be this :—“ Now that Nineveh is trembling before the armies of Cyaxares and Nabopalassar, thou hastenest to Egypt, hoping to rest upon her strength : but slowly and miserably shalt thou retrace thy steps, with thy hands clasped upon thy head, disgraced and discarded.”

555.—DRILLING THE EAR OF A SLAVE.—*Deut. xv. 17.*

The custom of drilling or boring the ear of slaves, which is found among the ancient Jews, in response to Mosaic injunctions, was retained by our Saxon forefathers, who used to pierce at the church-door the ears of their bond-servants ; and our English words *thrall* and *thraldom* have come down to us from the period when it was thus customary to *thrill* or *drill* the ear.

556.—PRIESTS' HEAD-DRESSES.—*Exod. xxviii. 36—38.*

Particular forms of cap, or head-dress, were anciently regarded as sacred, and appropriated to the gods. On the figure of Osiris, in the British Museum, may be seen a species of crown, a conical cap, flanked by two ostrich feathers with a disk in front, placed on the horns of a goat. Josephus describes the cap of the ordinary priest thus :—“ Upon his head he wears a cap not brought in a conical form, nor including the entire head, but still including more than the half of it. It is called a mitre, but its make is such that it resembles a crown. It is made of thick swathes, but the contexture of it is linen, and it is folded round many times, and sewed together ; besides which, a piece of fine linen covers the whole cap from the upper part, and reaches down to the forehead, and conceals the seams of the swathes, which would otherwise appear unseemly. This adheres closely to the head that it may not fall off during the sacred service.” The same writer

describes the high priest's head-dress. "The high priest's tiara or mitre was like that of the other priests, only it had another of purple or violet colour above, and a crown of gold of three rows about that, and terminating above in a golden cap, about the size of the joint of the little finger." We know that there was also in the front a plate of gold tied with a blue lace, and on the plate were inscribed the words, "Holiness to the Lord."

557.—PRESENTS OF RAIMENT.—*Gen. xxiv. 53.*

Presents of raiment were and are very common in the East. The allusions to the custom in the Bible are very numerous; and it is noteworthy that they are almost always given by superiors to those of lower rank. Joseph gave each of his brothers a change of raiment, and to Benjamin five changes (*Gen. xlvi. 22*). Naaman gave Gehazi two changes of raiment. When Jonathan first conceived a friendship for David, he stripped himself of his robe and garments, even to his sword, bow, and girdle, and made David a present of them (*1 Sam. xviii. 4*). Nehemiah, at the restoration of the Jewish state, gave 530 priests garments (*Neh. vii. 70*). The "best robe," given to the prodigal son, is familiar to everyone. The following words of a traveller show that the old custom, like most others of the East, survives to modern times. "When the French ambassadors, at the Sublime Porte, called upon the Vizir, that functionary entered the room, and their Excellencies rose to salute him. After which M. de Chateauneuf presented M. de Ferriol to him as his successor, to which the Vizir answered obligingly. Then they gave two dishes of coffee to their Excellencies, with sweetmeats, and afterwards perfumes and sherbet; then they clothed them with caffetans of a silver brocade, with large silk flowers, and to those that were admitted into the apartments with them they gave other brocade, almost all silk, except some slight gold or silver flowers." The caffetans are long vests of gold or silver brocade. The Sultan is accustomed to present them *before* the interview, the Vizir afterwards.

558.—THE LATER TREATMENT OF THE SCAPEGOAT. *Levit. xvi. 10.*

According to the law of Moses, the scapegoat was led into the wilderness, and there set free. But on one occasion the animal returned to Jerusalem, and the omen was thought so bad that afterwards it was led out to a high mountain, called

Sook, and there pushed over the precipice and dashed to pieces. It was taken out on the Sabbath-day. To evade, therefore, the law of the Sabbath-day's journey, a tabernacle was erected at every term of 2,000 cubits, in which the messenger ate and drank, after which he was legally enabled to travel another stage. Ten such tabernacles were constructed between Sook and Jerusalem, and the distance was ninety Ris, or about six and a half English miles. The district was called Hidoodim, and the high mountain Sook, the first meaning *sharp*, the second *narrow*, both applying well to the knife-edged ridges of the desert and hill. The distance of ninety Ris, measured from Jerusalem, brings us now to a great hill called El Muntâr ; beside the ancient road from Jerusalem there is now a well called Sûk, while in the modern name *Hadeidûn*, which is applied to a part of the ridge, we may recognise the earlier Hebrew word *Hidoodim*. Lieut. Conder, who suggests this identification, thinks we have in the present El Muntar the scene of the destruction of the scapegoat.

559.—A CURIOUS MARRIAGE CUSTOM.—*Gen. xxxviii. 11.*

To Europeans there is something repulsive in the thought of a woman being married successively to two or three brothers ; but in Eastern lands custom and sentiment have sanctioned the practice, and its people feel very differently respecting it. In the case to which this verse alludes, Tamar became the wife successively of Er and Onan. Both of them died, and she expected to be given to a still younger son of Judah, who was growing up ; but here Judah failed in his duty ; and Tamar took what appears to have been an extraordinary course to gain her rights. The case appears strange, and her conduct reprehensible ; but the following quotation will show that possibly Tamar acted entirely according to custom. A writer in the “Asiatic Researches,” speaking of the Garrow hills, north-east of Bengal, says :—“I discovered these (the following) circumstances of the marriage ceremony of the Garrows from being present at the marriage of Lungree, youngest daughter of the chief Oodassy, seven years of age, and Buglun, twenty-three years old, the son of a common Garrow ; and I may here observe that this marriage, disproportionate as to age and rank, is a very happy one for Buglun, as he will succeed to the Booneaship and estate ; for among the Garrows the youngest daughter is always heiress ; and if there were many other children born before

her they would get nothing on the death of the Booneah (chief). What is more strange, if Buglun were to die, Lungree would marry one of his brothers, and if all his brothers were dead she would then marry the father; and if the father should afterwards prove too old, she would put him aside and take anyone else whom she might choose." May not a custom of this kind have prevailed in Western Asia? Certainly the custom extended to all the brothers; possibly it did also to the father. Tamar may have deemed herself Judah's wife, and the fact that she was not punished seems to imply that her conduct was not considered criminal.

560.—ROUND TIRES LIKE THE MOON.—*Isaiah* iii. 18.

The women of Samaria wear now a head-dress which perfectly illustrates the prophet's description. It is a sort of bonnet with a horse-shoe shape in front, and in the front are some silver coins lapping over one another, and making a crescent-shaped tire (resembling the crescent moon) round the forehead and down to the ears.

561.—THE IDEAS ATTACHED TO THE SYMBOL OF THE CROSS IN INDIA.—*Gal.* vi. 14.

Dr. Zoekler has collected a vast mass of information concerning the early use and primitive meanings of the symbolic figure which we call the "Cross." The following passage is selected as indicating the prevailing ideas of India, which is said to abound in primitive symbols of the cross, of different form and significance.

"The Ansate cross, or Nile-key (a cross with a circle or globe at the head, which may originally have been intended to represent the sun and his diverging rays), is to be seen, with peculiar modifications, upon certain ancient representations of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; the Nile-key-like symbol *Tshakra*, held in the hands of these divinities, is said to imply dominion, majesty; and especially where it occurs as an attribute of Vishnu, to symbolise the eternal, ever-increasing dominion of this god over the lower world of earth. It is a curious fact that the obsequious follower of Vishnu attaches as many virtues to it as does the devout Romanist to the Christian Cross. Huge rude stone crosses, supposed to have been of pre-Christian origin, are said to have been discovered in various places of Citerior India. Also on the banks of the Godaverry, not far from Nirmul, and here in the immediate vicinity of certain cromlechs, the well-ascertained pre-Chris-

tian antiquity of which must, it is said, force us to a corresponding conclusion with regard to the period to which the crosses belong. (Fergusson, however, thinks that both the cromlechs and the crosses were raised in the Middle Ages.) With greater certainty may we regard the gigantic granite monoliths in the form of a cross, discovered by Mulheran in the Vindhya district of Central India, in the year 1869, as dating from a pre-Christian period. A particularly prominent part is played by the sign of the cross, mostly, indeed, in a somewhat curved shape, known as the *Swastika* cross among the Buddhists of Hither and Farther India. It is not, indeed, an object of adoration, but yet a specially favourite religious symbol of this sect. Originally it seems to have denoted for them the four corners or quarters of the world, and this, indeed, in the first place, in the more complete form of the sun-wheel (*i.e.*, the cross within a circle), which seems to indicate the four heavenly regions traversed by the sun's course (*i.e.*, the four points of the compass), of which the Swastika cross appears to be a later abbreviating transformation, effected by the omission of the greater part of the four arcs. The fact may be regarded as fully established that Buddhism has employed the cross, and indeed the above-mentioned simplest and most original Swastika cross, as an image of the world or earth, as an architectural element in its most imposing temple-structures of Hither and Farther India. The great pagoda at Benares was constructed on the plan of a colossal cross, and the great Buddhist temples of Cambodia are not merely adorned with cruciform figures, but express in general outlines the form of the cross."

562.—PROOFS OF DESIGN IN THE FIELD-GRASSES.
Psalm civ. 14.

The Rev. Hugh Macmillan skilfully sets forth the mystery of fitness and adaptation which may be observed in the "grass of the field," and so contributes a valuable addition to the argument for an intelligent Creator drawn from the works He has wrought. He says, "The structure of the grass exhibits interesting proofs of design. The root, in proportion to its size, is more fibrous and tenacious than that of any other plant. In some instances it is so vital that, like Hercules' Hydra, the more it is hacked and cut, the faster it spreads itself; and it runs so extensively, each joint sending up a new shoot, that it encloses a considerable space of soil. In this way the grass clusters closely together, and covers the ground as with a

carpet; while, in the absence of blossoms, which are often prevented from forming by the cropping of animals, the budding roots propagate the plant, so that the effect of grazing pasture-lands is always to increase the vegetation laterally, and make the verdure more compact. The stem or culm is hollow, provided at intervals with knots, and invested, as if by some mysterious process of electrotype, with a thin coating of flint. It is constructed in this manner so as to combine the utmost strength with its light and elegant form; and so efficient are these mechanical appliances, that it rarely gives way under the force of the most violent winds, unless when heavy and long-continued rains lay it prostrate, and beat upon it until its elasticity is destroyed. The leaves next exhibit an adaptation to circumstances no less remarkable. They are spear-shaped, and strongly ribbed with threads of flinty fibre, thus forming wedges admirably fitted for forcing their way with least resistance through the soil; they are long, narrow, alternate, and sheathing the stem for a considerable distance, in order to present as small a surface, and give as light a hold as possible to the winds; they are destitute of branches, so as to qualify them for growing together in masses without suffering from want of air and light—the whole stem being succulent and covered with spiracles or air holes, thus acting as lungs along with the leaves. And last of all, the flower is a perfect miracle of design. It is produced from the upper sheath, which encloses it altogether when young; it is disposed in simple or branching heads, each head consisting of two or more chaffy scales, inserted the one above the other, like the plates of a steel cuirass. From each of these scales three slender white threads hang out, crowned with yellow dusty knobs, playing freely about in every breeze. These little threads or stamens are of the most vital importance: for without their agency the ears of corn would not fill with the nutritious grain, and they are exposed to a thousand casualties. Upwards of three hundred genera and more than five thousand different species of grass exist in the world. But though presenting so many varieties, the typical character is strong in them all; the whole appearance, the general air, the manner of growth, the peculiarities of structure, are in each species so similar, that no class of plants can be so easily identified."

563.—TREATMENT OF INFANTS.—*Ezek. xvi. 4.*

In the East, at the present day, as soon as a babe is born it is washed in *salted* water, clothed and swathed in a long

bandage, or swaddling cloth, three or four inches wide, and about ten feet long, which is firmly wound around it from the neck downward, including the arms, which are thus pinioned to its sides, so that it can stir neither hand nor foot. This is done with the idea of keeping the tender bones motionless in a proper position until they acquire sufficient strength to be allowed to move about. It is, moreover, easier for the mother to carry the little one on her arm or slung on her back. The cradle is low, and rocks readily to and fro by the simple pulling of a string fastened to its side, while large rings of glass or metal, strung upon a transverse stick, amuse the child with their jingle. The little one lies tightly bound in its cradle day and night, being taken up once or twice in the twenty-four hours. Its mother leans over the cradle to nurse it, and hushes its cries by incessant rocking: all night long lying in her bed, spread upon the floor close by, she never lets go the cradle string. When the child begins to creep or walk about with uncertain steps, little anklets, consisting of silver chains or bands, hung with tiny bells, are fastened round its ankles, and their constant tinkling announces to the mother the whereabouts of her child.—*Van Lennep.*

564.—HINDOO LEGENDS OF THE FLOOD.—*Gen. vii. 17.*

The ancient Hindoo Books contain several stories, perhaps they are rather several versions of one story, of the Flood. One of them runs somewhat thus:—Desiring the preservation of herbs, and of *Brahmans*, of genii, and virtuous men, of the *Vedas* (ancient sacred books), the law, and precious things, the Lord of the Universe assumes many bodily shapes, but though he pervades, like the air, a variety of beings, yet he is himself unvaried, since he has no quality which is subject to change. At the close of the last *culpa* (epoch) there was a general destruction occasioned by the sleep of Brahma; whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. Brahma being inclined to sleep, desiring repose after a lapse of ages, the strong demon Hayagriva came near him, and stole the *Vedas*, which had flowed from his lips. When Heri, the preserver of the universe, discovered this deed of the prince of the *danavas* (demons), he took the shape of a minute fish, called *saphari*. A holy king named Satyavrata then reigned, a servant of the *spirit that moved on the waves* (see *Gen. i. 2*), and so devout that water was his only sustenance. One day, as he was making a libation in the river, and held water in the palm of his hand, he perceived a small fish moving in it.

This was the *saphari*, who, after several very surprising adventures, is discovered by the king to be Bhagavat, or Heri, to whom the devout man began to pay worship and honour. Thereupon Heri, the Lord of the Universe, loving the pious monarch, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction, *caused by the depravity of the age* (comp. Gen. vi. 5—8), thus told him how to act : “ In seven days (Gen. vii. 4) from the present time the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death ; but in the midst of the destroying waves a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then thou shalt take in all medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds, and accompanied by seven saints (comp. the ‘sevens’ of clean beasts, Gen. vii. 2, 3), encircled by *pairs of brute* animals, thou shalt enter the spacious Ark, and continue in it secure from the flood. When the ship shall be agitated by an impetuous wind, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea-serpent on my horn (the little fish had previously grown to an enormous magnitude and developed a remarkable horn) ; but I will be near thee, drawing the vessel with thee and thy attendants. I will remain on the ocean until the night of Brahma shall be completely ended. Thou shalt know my true greatness, rightly named the supreme god-head.” Satyavrata waited the time specified, and the sea overwhelming its shores, deluged the whole earth ; and it was soon perceived that it was augmented by showers from immense clouds (see Gen. vii. 11, 12). The Ark approached at the time it was needed, and Satyavrata and his companions entered. By-and-by Bhagavat appeared in the form of a fish, blazing like gold, extending a million leagues, having one stupendous horn ; he took the Ark under his protection, and accomplished the preservation of all in it. When the flood abated, Heri and Brahma slew the demon Hayagriva, and recovered the sacred book. It is but fair to say that the Hindoos themselves did not regard the extravagances of the story as anything more than embellishments. One can hardly doubt that the substance of the legend is the same as the Mosaic record.

565.—THE BROOK ZERED.—*Deut. ii. 13, 14.*

The identity of this stream has not been certainly established. Some have supposed it to be the modern Es Saideh, a tributary of the Arnon, on the south side. Others have found it in the Beni Hamed, an inconsiderable torrent, not more than six or seven miles long, which, rising near the ruins of the ancient Rabbah Moab, falls into the Dead Sea near the

bottom of its eastern bay. But it has been lately, with more probability, assigned to the *Wady Ahsa*, the largest stream that flows into the shallow area at the southern extremity of the sea. The course of this river is about thirty-five miles, from its rise near Kulat el Ahsy to its mouth just opposite the dreary salt-mountains of Usdum. An extensive plain, very slightly rising inland, covered with verdure, all unwonted in this vicinity, but terminating seaward in a broad bank of soft mud, is intersected by the stream at the termination of its course, which, for the most part, lies through the dark frowning rocks of Edom, the ancient Mount Seir. Rugged as these mountains are, however, they have not the terrible barrenness of those to the west of the Arabah, though they are more lofty. Their sides are studded with clumps of trees, and the valleys are full of shrubs and flowers, with a good deal of land under cultivation. The Brook Zered appears to have formed the boundary between the fertile and populous land of Moab and the Desert of Arabia.—*P. H. Gosse.*

566.—“TAKE THY BILL, AND WRITE FOURSORE.”
Luke xvi. 1—8.

The parable of the unjust steward is peculiar, interesting, and difficult, the customs that underlie and explain such cases being unknown in our country. Among the Turks, however, it was formerly the custom for merchants when hiring a broker, book-keeper, or other confidential servant, to agree that he should claim no salary, but pay himself by commission levied upon those with whom he did business. The agent might go as far as he pleased, provided he did not extort from his master's debtors above ten per cent. more than was due to the master himself, but all within this margin was his own. This mode of business, though injurious to trade, was by no means dishonest, as all parties concerned understood the custom and transacted business with the full knowledge that the steward would have to pay himself in the manner described. And among other Orientals also a man who wrought for no defined wage could claim one-tenth of the profits.

It appears that the steward could not claim his ten per cent. until the accounts had been rendered to the master; if then it was found that he had been “unfaithful in that which was another man's,” viz., his employer, the employer, of course, would not “give him that which was his own,” viz., the commission. As a rule, no doubt the agent preyed more upon the customers than upon his employer; but in the parable the steward appears to

have favoured the customers at the expense of his master ; and when the master threatened him with dismissal, knowing that he should lose his commission now already due if his master ascertained, or even suspected, any dishonesty, the prudent man secured a portion of his earnings by collusion with the debtors, feeling confident, no doubt, that they would pay him the discount when he should demand it.

567.—EASTERN STREET-DOGS.—*Rev. xxii. 15.*

A gentleman, resident for many years in Constantinople, gives the following interesting account of the character and work of the Eastern dogs, and so explains the references to these creatures found in Old-Testament Scriptures. There is no indication in the Bible of dogs being petted, as we are accustomed to pet them ; the shepherd's dog must, however, have been to some extent trained to his work.

“ One of the first curiosities that strikes the eyes of strangers arriving at Constantinople, or, indeed, at any Eastern city, is the number of ownerless dogs in the streets. The stranger usually lands at Tophané, and here is a huge mound, or dung-hill, the accumulation of refuse which is thrown here, and part of which rolls into the tide of the Bosphorus. The organic matter on this heap naturally attracts the dogs. They are a listless, sleepy race of animals during the day, but in the night they are more lively, and it is said that at times they are dangerous. They are of various forms and appearance, owing to the crossing at times of domesticated animals, but the genuine type is that of a foxy-looking animal of a reddish hue, with a sharp nose and prick ears, almost the size of a small colley-dog. They are sometimes called wild dogs, which is scarcely an accurate description, as they are thoroughly domesticated amongst men, though they have no owners. They are of a certain use as scavengers, though this office is performed by them in a perfunctory manner ; for as long as they can obtain the offal from the houses, broken bread, meat, and the like, they will not touch dead animals that the Turks allow to lie in the streets. These carcases are usually dragged to the Bosphorus, and thrown into the water. There is a distinct and remarkable organization in the dog community. They have their separate quarters, and it is death to stray into another quarter.

“ The Turks are compassionate to these dogs, the Christians cruel : the latter consider them a nuisance, and persecute them

with blows, scalding water, and poison, and some Christian quarters, notably Pera and Galata, have pretty well rid themselves of these creatures. The Turks gather together the leavings of their houses, and throw them into the street, where they are quickly disposed of; but a good Moslem will never touch a dog, as it is an unclean animal. It is quite touching to see the affectionate invitations of a Turkish shepherd-dog to be caressed by his master: he will throw himself at his feet, whine, and roll in the dust, but his master merely answers *usht* (begone), which he accompanies with a kick of the foot."

568.—SHAVING THE HEAD.—*Job i. 20.*

This was a common mode of expressing great sorrow. Sometimes it was done by formally cutting off the hair of the head; sometimes by violently plucking it out by the roots; and sometimes also the beard was plucked out, or cut off. The idea seems to have been that mourners should divest themselves of that which was usually deemed most ornamental. Lucian says that the Egyptians expressed their grief by cutting off their hair on the death of their god Apis, and the Syrians in the same manner at the death of Adonis. Olympiadorus remarks on this passage, that the people among whom long hair was regarded as an ornament, cut it off in times of mourning, but those who commonly wore short hair, suffered it on such occasions to grow long.

569.—JEWISH OPINIONS OF THE SAMARITANS.—*John viii. 48.*

The Jews called the Samaritans Cuthites, from Cuth, or Cuthah, the unknown country from which Shalmaneser brought many of their forefathers to dwell in the depopulated cities of Israel (2 Kings xvii. 24). There was nothing offensive in this designation originally, but in the mouth of a Jew it ultimately became an expression of deepest abhorrence, just as was "Samaritan," which seems to have been regarded as equal to "devil." The Jews thought nothing too weak or too ridiculous for the Samaritans to do. They accused them of worshipping the ear-rings and amulets which Jacob buried under the "Enchanter's Oak" (Gen. xxxv. 4) near Shechem; they formally cursed them in their synagogues; they would not receive them as proselytes; they declared that to eat their bread was like eating swine's flesh; and they dogmatically

and maliciously asserted that they would have no part in the resurrection. They also accused them of waylaying the Jews for robbery or murder ; of misleading them by false fire signals ; and that they scattered bones in order to defile the temple at Jerusalem.

Dr. Frankl, in his *Jews in the East*, gives the same picture of the antagonism of these races at the present time. "Are you a Jew ?" asked Salameh Cohen, the Samaritan high priest, "And do you come to us, the Samaritans, who are despised by the Jews ?" The doctor says that they would gladly live at peace with the Jews, but that the latter avoid all intercourse with them. Soon after visiting the Samaritans, Dr. Frankl visited some Jews of Nablous (the ancient Shechem), when one of the sect asked "if he had had any intercourse with the Samaritans." The women retreated with a cry of horror, and one of them said, "Have you been among the worshippers of the pigeon ?" I said that I had. The women again fell back with the same expression of repugnance, and one of them said, "Take a purifying bath !"

The mention of the pigeon in the woman's question appears to be a reference to a ridiculous story, which says that the Romans under Adrian placed a pigeon in the temple of Gerizim to prevent the Samaritans from going there to worship ; and when any of them were bold enough to pass the watch at night, and go to the temple, the pigeon cried out, "The Hebrews ! the Hebrews !" Whereupon the guard would fall upon the worshippers and put them to death. The Jews accused the Samaritans of worshipping this bird.

570.—JOSEPH'S TREATMENT OF BENJAMIN.—*Gen. xliii. 34.*

An ancient tradition adds the following particulars to the Bible narrative :—"When Joseph entertained his brethren he set them two together, consequently Benjamin, being the eleventh, was obliged to sit by himself, and bursting into tears he said, 'If my brother Joseph were alive, he would have sat with me.' Whereupon Joseph ordered Benjamin to be seated at the same table with himself. When the entertainment was over he dismissed the ten, ordering them to be lodged in pairs in the house, but he kept Benjamin in his own apartment, where he passed the night. The next day Joseph asked Benjamin if he would accept of himself as his brother in the room of the one he had lost ; to which Benjamin replied, 'Who can find a brother comparable unto thee ? yet thou art

not the son of Jacob and Rachel.' Upon this Joseph made himself known."

571.—THE CONVERSION OF ETHIOPIA TO CHRISTIANITY.

Acts viii. 27.

It is every way reasonable to suppose that the converted eunuch would spread abroad, in his own country, the knowledge of the Saviour he had found, and we find in Abyssinia, which forms a principal part of the territories comprised by the ancients under the name Ethiopia, a tradition that their conversion to Christianity was due to the instructions of this eunuch. Neander, however, gives an account of the providential circumstances leading to their conversion in the fourth century, which rests on better authority than the older tradition. He says :—“ A learned Greek of Tyre, named Meropius, had, in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, undertaken a voyage of scientific discovery. Already on the point of returning, he landed on the coast of Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, to procure fresh water, where he was attacked, robbed, and himself and crew murdered, by the warlike natives, who were at that time in a state of hostility with the Roman empire. Two young men, his companions, Frumentius and Ædesius, alone were spared, out of pity for their tender age. These two youths were taken into the service of the prince of the tribe, and made themselves beloved. Ædesius became his cup-bearer ; Frumentius, who was distinguished for intelligence and sagacity, was appointed his secretary and accountant. After the death of the prince, the education of *Ælizanes*, the young heir, was entrusted to them ; and Frumentius obtained great influence as administrator of the government. He made use of this influence in behalf of Christianity. He sought the acquaintance of the Roman merchants visiting those parts, who were Christians ; assisted them in founding a church, and united with them in the Christian worship of God. Finally, they obtained liberty to return home to their country. Ædesius repaired to Tyre, where he was made a presbyter. Here Rufinus became acquainted with him, and learned all the particulars of his story from his own mouth. But Frumentius felt himself called to a higher work. He felt bound to see to it that the people with whom he had spent the greater part of his youth, and from whom he had received so many favours, should be made to share in the highest blessing of mankind. He travelled, therefore, to Alexandria,

where the great Athanasius had recently been made bishop (A.D. 326). Athanasius entered at once, with ready sympathy, into the plan of Frumentius. But he found, very justly, that no one could be a more suitable agent for the prosecution of this work than Frumentius himself; and he consecrated him Bishop of Auxuma [Axum], the chief city of the Abyssinians, and a famous commercial town. Frumentius returned back to this place, and laboured there with great success."

572.—DRINKING USED AS A FIGURE.—*Psalm lxxv. 8.*

"This idiom is very common in Arabic. It seems natural to the Oriental mind to conceive of many operations under the idea of *eating* and *drinking*, which we connect more directly with some other sense than that of taste, or else mention abstractly. Thus they very commonly speak of *eating* a great rain when they have been thoroughly drenched in a shower; so also they eat a violent wind and a piercing cold. I frequently hear them say of one who has been bastinadoed on the soles of his feet, that he has *eaten* fifty or five hundred sticks, as the case may be. In like manner they drink many strange potions. In their self-conceit they will offer to drink the whole course of scientific education in three months. Persons not particularly encumbered with modesty have assured me that they could drink the entire system of evangelical religion with even greater expedition."—*Thomson.*

573.—DIVINATION BY ARROWS.—*Ezek. xxi. 21.*

This kind of divination was used by the Arabs in the case of marriage, the circumcision of their children, and when setting out on a journey. It is expressly forbidden in the Koran. D'Herbelot gives the following account of the practice:—"The ancient idolatrous Arabs used a sort of lots, which were called lots by arrows. These arrows were without heads or feathers, and were three in number; upon one of them was written, 'Command me, Lord,' upon the second, 'Forbid, or prevent, Lord,' the third arrow was blank. When any one wanted to determine on a course of action, he went, with a present, to the diviner (who was the chief priest of the temple), who drew one of his arrows from his bag, and if the arrow of 'command' appeared, he immediately set about the affair; if that of prohibition appeared, he deferred the execution of his enterprise for a whole year; when the blank arrow came out, he was to draw again. The name which the Arabs gave to the arrows for divination was *Acdah*."

574.—GIVE THIS MAN PLACE.—*Luke xiv. 9.*

Mr. Morier, relating his personal experiences in Persia, shews how strictly true to life was our Lord's description. Giving an account of his presence at an entertainment prepared by one of the chief men of the state, he writes :—“On alighting at the house, we were conducted through mean and obscure passages to a small square court, surrounded by apartments, which were the habitations of the women, who had been dislodged on the occasion ; and as we entered into a low room, we there found our host waiting for us, with about a dozen more of his friends. The ambassador (from England, whom Mr. Morier accompanied) was placed in the corner of honour, near the window, and his host next to him, on his left hand. The other guests were arranged around the room, according to their respective ranks. . . . When a Persian enters an assembly, after having left his shoes without, he makes the usual salutation of ‘Peace be unto you !’ which is addressed to the whole assembly, as it were saluting the house, and then, measuring with his eye the degree of rank to which he holds himself entitled, he straightway wedges himself into the line of guests, without offering any apology for the general disturbance which he produces. It may be conceived that, among a vain people, the disputes which arise on matters of precedence are numerous ; and it was easy to observe by the countenance of those present, when any one had taken a higher seat than that to which he was entitled. The Persian scribes are remarkable for their arrogance in this respect ; and bring to mind the caution that our Saviour gave to the Jews against their scribes, whom among other things He characterises as loving ‘the uppermost rooms at feasts.’ The master of the entertainment has, however, the privilege of placing any one as high in the ranks of the assembly as he may choose, and we saw an instance of it on this occasion : for, when the assembly was nearly full, the Governor of Kashan, a man of humble mien, though of considerable rank, came in, and had seated himself at the lowest place, when the host, after having testified his particular attentions to him by numerous expressions of welcome, pointed with his hand to an upper seat in the assembly, to which he desired him to move, which he accordingly did.”

575.—PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING.—*1 Thess. v. 17.*

A curious illustration of the perversion of Scripture by

forcing too literal a meaning upon its injunctions is found in the habits of an order of monks, instituted either in the beginning or middle of the fifth century, by a person of the name of Alexander, under the auspices of Gennadius, the patriarch of Constantinople. Founding their practice on the above passage applied in the barest and most literal manner, they so regulated their worship that it was never interrupted by day or by night, one class of the brethren succeeding another continually. From this peculiarity they obtained the name of the “Sleepless,” *Acæmetæ*. The piety of these watchers caused them to be held in great veneration, and many monasteries were built for their use. They however fell into the Nestorian heresy, which prevailed in the sixth century, and were condemned in A.D. 532, by the Emperor Justinian and Pope John II.

576.—THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE WORD JEHOVAH. *Exodus* iii. 14.

Hebrew words used to be written without vowels, those being inserted by the reader, probably according to fixed rules. We know the actual consonants composing the word Jehovah; but the Jews assert that the proper pronunciation of it is lost; and, presuming that some mysterious power lies in the mere name, they say that whoever could find the real name would be able to reveal secrets and mysteries. Another name for God, *Adonai*, or Lord, is always read instead of Jehovah, so that the thrice sacred name may not be pronounced, even accidentally; and the vowels of this word, Adonai, are put to the letters of the original word, in our Hebrew word, and they give the name this form *Jehovah*, with which we are familiar.

According to Cabballistic writers, the name Jehovah forms a bond of union to all the splendours, and constitutes the pillar upon which they all rest. Every letter of which it is composed is fraught with mysteries. They assert that this name includes all things, and that he who pronounces it puts the whole world, and all the creatures and things which comprise the universe, into his mouth. Hence it ought not to be pronounced but with great caution. They teach that the highest measure of knowledge and perfection is to know the whole import of the ineffable name of Jehovah.

577.—WEEPING FOR TAMMUZ.—*Ezek.* viii. 14.

The word *Tammuz* is found among the names of the months in use among the Jews after their return from Babylon. It

was the month of the summer solstice, when in the East nature seems to wither and die under the scorching heat of the sun, to burst forth again into life in due season. Jerome says that the feast of Tammuz was identical with the Greek *Adonides* or feasts of Adonis. It appears that the worship of Adonis had its headquarters at Byblos, in Syria, where, at certain periods of the year, the stream, becoming stained by mountain floods, was popularly said to be red with the blood of Adonis. As soon as the water of the river began to be tinged with blood colour, the women commenced their weeping, and when the red colour disappeared, the return of Adonis to life was announced, and sorrow was exchanged for joy. It is easy to recognise in this a form of Nature-worship ; the death of Adonis symbolised the suspension of the productive powers of Nature, which were in due time revived. The excitement attendant upon the extravagances of alternate wailing and exultation were in complete accordance with the character of Nature-worship, which for this reason was so popular in the East, especially with women, and led, by inevitable consequence, to unbridled license and excess.

According to the Greek mythology, this Adonis was a beautiful young shepherd, with whom the goddess Venus became enamoured. In a fit of jealousy Mars, who happened to meet him in hunting, killed him. The goddess was deeply grieved at the death of her lover, and obtained from Proserpine permission for him to leave the infernal regions six months in the year. Accordingly, the anniversary of the death of Adonis, which was observed with mourning and sorrow, was followed by a season of joy.

578.—THE CUSTOM OF MAKING GIFTS TO GREAT MEN.

1 Sam. ix. 7.

A well-known Eastern traveller writes :—“It is counted uncivil to visit in this country without an offering in hand. All great men expect it as a kind of tribute done to their character and authority, and look upon themselves as affronted, and, indeed, defrauded, when this compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits amongst inferior people, you shall seldom have them come without bringing a flower, or an orange, or some other such token of respect to the person visited ; the Turks in this point keeping up the ancient Oriental custom hinted in *1 Sam. ix. 7* : ‘If we go,’ says Saul, ‘what shall we bring the man of God ? there is not a present,’ &c., which words are, doubtless, to be understood in conformity to

this Eastern custom, as relating to a token of respect, and not a price of divination."

579.—STREETS IN EASTERN CITIES.—*Acts ix. 11.*

Damascus is a truly Oriental city; everything is Eastern, and therefore a description of its streets, one of which is named in the Scripture passage referred to above, will suffice to illustrate the usual arrangement of Eastern towns. The following paragraph is taken from Kelly's *Syria and the Holy Land*:

"The aspect of the streets of Damascus certainly does not meet the expectation excited by its romantic appearance as viewed from a distance: they are narrow and irregular, and flanked with ugly dead walls; but broad streets are no luxury in a warm climate; 'and here,' says Dr. Richardson, 'I felt the full force of the remark of Tacitus, that Nero spoiled Rome by broad streets.' Those of Damascus are seldom of a width more than sufficient to allow two laden camels to pass each other without crushing the pedestrians, and many are of much narrower dimensions. They are the most noiseless possible: there are no wheeled carriages rolling along them; and the occasional step of a Christian's ass, a camel, a mule, or more rarely of a horse, does not much disturb the mysterious stillness in which the city appears wrapped, until you approach the bazaars and other places of busy resort. . . . All great Eastern towns are difficult to thread, but few in so great a degree as Damascus, from the perplexing intricacy of the narrow streets and of the many winding bazaars. Sometimes you are pinned up in a corner by a long string of camels, that fill the whole breadth of the way; and sometimes you are run down and covered with filth by a whole line of donkeys, that trot heedlessly on with noiseless tread over the sandy soil. However leisurely these animals may move when the road is open and plain before them, they are all possessed with an insane propensity for rushing forwards whenever the passage is narrowed by any casual obstruction; and when there happens to be several of them together on these occasions, a race ensues, which ends, perhaps, in two or three of them becoming fast wedged together; and then their kicking and pushing only make the case more desperate. The streets have a large barrier at each end, which is always closed at sunset, or very soon after, as a protection against thieves, and, as some say, wives; but a very small bribe will open the barrier at any hour of the night, for there is always a gatekeeper at hand. It is not likely that these gates are of much use against solitary prowlers, for

it would be an easy matter to run along the tops of the houses through any quarter of the city ; and a man attacked in one house might not despair of making his escape by concealing himself in that of a distant inhabitant without passing through the streets. Their chief use is to check sudden insurrectionary movements. The guardianship of these barriers is usually committed to ancient and quiet watchmen, who are by no means in a hurry to answer those who knock. When at last the porter makes his appearance, a parley takes place : ‘ Kimtur o,—who is that ? ’ ‘ Iba beled,—a townsman.’ ‘ Wah hid Allah—testify that there is one God.’ And thereupon, the man on the wrong side of the door, whatever may be his impatience, must repeat the Muslim confession of faith ; for it is argued, with touching simplicity, that no one who was abroad on a guilty errand would dare to utter the hallowed symbol. These impediments to free circulation through the streets by night are not felt as an inconvenience by the Orientals. The shops are all closed at the approach of dusk, and every true believer goes home to his own house, which he does not quit till the following morning. What should he do in the dirty streets ? Behind the shabby walls that bound it the Muslim has his own sufficient paradise, concealed from every prying eye.”

580.—BORDERS OF GARMENTS.—*Matt. xxiii. 5.*

The custom of wearing particular garments remains among the modern Jews. Allen says :—“ Every male is required to have a quadrangular vestment, which they call *Talleth*, and which is worn constantly as an inner garment. It consists of two quadrangular pieces, generally of woollen, sometimes of silk, joined together at the upper ends by two fillets, or broad straps, with a space left sufficient for the head to pass between them. These fillets rest on the shoulders, and the two square pieces hang down, one over the back and the other over the breast. From each of the corners hangs a fringe, or tassel, consisting of eight threads, and tied with five knots. From its having four corners, this vestment is called *arba canphoth* ; but its principal denomination, *Tsitsith*, it receives from the fringes upon which all its sanctity is supposed to depend. They have likewise a larger *Talleth*, which they are required to put on during the daily morning prayers, and on some other occasions. This is a square piece of cloth, like a napkin, or rather resembling a shawl, made of white sheep or lamb wool, sometimes of camel hair, and bordered with stripes of blue,

with a fringe or tassel at each corner. The threads composing the fringes attached to both the small and large Talleth are of wool that has been shorn, not pulled or plucked, and spun by the hand of a Jewess for the express purpose of being used in these fringes. Four threads, of which one must be blue, if it can be obtained, are passed through an eyelet-hole made about the breadth of three fingers from each edge forming the angle ; these threads are to be doubled, and to make eight ; seven are to be of equal length, and the eighth must be long enough to twist five times round the rest, for the purpose of tying five tight knots, and afterwards to have an end of the same length as the other seven. The large Talleth, at the appointed seasons, is thrown loosely over all the other garments ; sometimes passing across the top of the head, and flowing down over the upper part of each arm and over the back ; sometimes wrapped round the neck ; but more generally drawn together, and passing across the top of the head and down over the forepart of each shoulder, like a scarf.”

581.—COATS OF MANY COLOURS.—*Gen. xxxvii. 3.*

An Eastern traveller writes :—“As we proceeded onwards, we had a most lively representation of ‘Joseph in his coat of many colours.’ A young Arab met us, probably an only, or favourite son, dressed in a tunie, as fine as art could make it ; the work of some modern Aholiab, ‘a cunning workman . . . in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet . . . of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.’ All the colours of the rainbow were associated in it, in the most curious and fantastical manner imaginable. So that the taste for such kind of finery is still in existence. ‘Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age,’ etc. Here lay the secret spring of all the subsequent afflictions, both of the father and the child ! And could anything excuse parental partiality, the reason alleged would do it.”

Roberts gives the following note :—“For beautiful or favourite children, precisely the same thing is done at this day. Crimson, and purple, and other colours, are often tastefully sewed together. Sometimes the children of the Mohammedans have their jackets embroidered with gold and silk of various colours. A child being clothed in a garment of many colours, it is believed that neither tongues nor evil spirits will injure him, because the attention is taken from the beauty of the person to that of the garment. Children seldom wear them after

they are eight years of age ; though it must have been the custom amongst the ancients referred to in the Bible to wear them longer, as we read of Tamar having ‘a garment of divers colours upon her ; for with such robes were the king’s daughters that were virgins apparelled.’”—*Oriental Illustrations of Scripture*.

In Jowet’s *Christian Researches*, reference is made to the fondness of the women of the East for gaily coloured, and richly ornamented dresses,—“Whatever other fashions may have changed in the East—and yet we may truly believe that very few have varied—there is one still stationary, the sight of which carries us back to the remotest Scripture antiquity : I mean the fashion of splendid dresses. I had a full specimen of it this evening, in the lady of the house. She produced, from her wardrobe, at least ten heavy outer garments, coats of many colours, embroidered and spangled with gold and silver and flowers. I was weary with her showing them, at which she seemed surprised. There are some of them as old as the date of her marriage, some still older. They are only worn on great festivals, as Christmas, Easter, etc., when she sits in state to receive her friends, and hands coffee and a pipe to them. It is whimsical, however, to see how her splendid dresses are contrasted with her humble daily occupations ; for, in the ordinary duties of the house, she is to be found sweeping out the kitchen, boiling the pot, etc. ; and she eats her meals when her husband and his friends have finished, sitting on the ground with children and servants at the parlour-door : and such, generally, is the condition of females in Eastern countries. She wears an infinity of braids, which hang down all the length of her back, and terminate in gold sequins ; which, together with those that she wears on her head, may be worth from five to ten pounds sterling.”

582.—ROOFS DROPPING THROUGH.—*Eccles. x. 18.*

Thomson efficiently illustrates this expression ; speaking from experience and observation of life in Syria, he says :—“The peasants in all this region build very ephemeral habitations with small stones and mud, which, if deserted, soon fall and melt away like summer snow on the mountains. The roof of any of these huts, forsaken or neglected through idleness, will ‘drop through’ in a single winter, and then the unprotected walls *wash down* by the rain, and speedily become mere shapeless heaps. The cause is readily explained. The roof is made by heaping a thick stratum of earth over the

brush, thorns, and cane, which are laid on the beams to receive it. This earth, if not constantly rolled, or carefully plastered, so as to shed the rain, absorbs it, until the weight breaks the beams, and then the whole mass drops through, bursting out the feeble walls, which now have nothing to bind them together. The mortar used is without lime, and when thoroughly saturated by the rain, becomes as slippery as soap ; and thus the whole fabric tumbles into a dismal ruin. Indeed, such frail houses often fall suddenly during great storms, and crush the inhabitants to death."

583.—RABBINICAL RULES FOR GIVING THANKS. *Romans xiv. 6.*

" What blessing must be said for fruit ? For fruit which grows on a tree say, ' who createst the fruit of the tree,' except for wine, for thereon the benediction is, ' who createst the fruit of the vine.' For fruits growing on the earth say, ' who createst the fruit of the earth,' except for bread, for thereon the benediction, ' who bringest forth bread from the earth,' must be said. For vegetables say, ' who createst the fruit of the earth. R. Jehudah saith, ' who createst various kinds of herbs.' If he has said the benediction, ' who createst the fruits of the earth,' for fruit grown on trees, he has acquitted himself of the obligation to return thanks ; but should he say, ' the fruit of the tree,' for fruits grown on the earth, he has not acquitted himself. But if for either kind he said, ' who gave being to all things through his mandate,' he hath acquitted himself. For things which do not derive their immediate growth from the earth or the ground say, ' who gave being to all things,' etc. For vinegar, unripe fruit which has dropt off the tree, and locusts, say, ' who gave being,' etc. On milk, cheese, and eggs, say also as before. R. Jehudah saith no blessing should be pronounced over things which had their origin in a curse or corruption, or which partake of the character of a curse. If a man has before him various kinds of fruits, R. Jehudah saith, If there be among them of the seven kinds, he is to pronounce the benediction thereon ; but the sages say he may say the blessing on which of them he pleases. If the blessing on wine has been said before commencing the meal, it frees the wine drunk after the meal. If the blessing has been said over anything eaten before the meal, it frees the dessert eaten after the meal. If the blessing has been said over the bread, it frees the dessert ; but the blessing on what is eaten before it does not free the

bread. Beth Shammai says, 'Neither does it free that which has been cooked made dishes.' If several persons sit down to eat, each one must say grace for himself; but if they sit at the same table, one says grace for them all. If wine is brought to them during the meal, each one says the blessing thereon for himself; but if it is brought after the meal, one says the blessing for them all. He also says the blessing for the perfume, although that be not brought till after the meal. If salted food be set before a man, and bread with it, the blessing is said on the salted food, which frees the bread, as that is only an accessory. The general rule is, whenever any principal article of food is partaken of, with an accessory to it, the blessing is said on the principle article, which frees the accessory. If a person have eaten figs, grapes, and pomegranates, he must say three blessings after them. Such is the dictum of Rabbon Gamaliel; but the sages hold one blessing only, being a compendium of the three. R. Akiva saith, even if a person has eaten nothing but boiled pulse, and he has made his meal of it, he is bound to say the three blessings. Whoever drinks water to satisfy his thirst says the blessing. R. Tarphon saith, he must say the blessing, 'who createst many animate beings and providest for their wants,' etc. Three men who have eaten together are bound to join in the preparation to say grace after meat. If a person has eaten that which is subject to the doubt, whether it has paid tithe or not, or of first tithe, from which the heave offering has been taken; or of second tithe or consecrated things which have been redeemed: also, if the water or attendant has partaken of their meal, a quantity of the size of an olive, or if a Samaritan makes up the party, the preparatory benediction before grace must be said. But if things untithed have been eaten, or first tithes, of which the heave offering has not been taken, or consecrated things which have not been redeemed; or if the waiter has eaten any quantity less than the size of an olive of that meal, or if an idolater makes up the party, the grace is not to be said. Women, slaves, and infants cannot be included in the number required for the grace. Which is the smallest quantity of food that qualifies for the grace? The size of an olive. R. Jehudah saith the size of an egg. Which is the form of the grace? If three form the party, he who says grace says, 'Let us bless Him of whose gifts we have eaten.' If three form the party beside himself, he says, 'Bless ye Him,' etc. If ten form the party, he says, 'Let us bless our God,' etc.; if ten, exclusive of himself, he says,

'Bless ye our God,' etc. Whether there be ten or ten myriads the form of grace remains the same. If there are exactly one hundred, he says, 'Let us bless the Lord our God,' etc. ; if there are one hundred exclusive of himself, he says, 'Bless ye the Lord our God,' etc. If there are one thousand, he says, 'Let us bless the Lord our God, the God of Israel.' If there are a thousand exclusive of himself, he says, 'Bless ye the Lord our God, the God of Israel,' etc. If there are a myriad, he says, 'Let us bless the Lord our God, the God of Israel, the God of hosts, who is enthroned amidst the cherubim,' etc. If there are a myriad exclusive of himself, he says, 'Bless ye,' etc., etc. And in the same manner as he pronounced the preparatory invocation, those who sit at the table make the responses. Thus, for instance, they say, 'Blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, the God of hosts, who is enthroned amidst the cherubim, for the food we have eaten.' R. José, the Galilean, saith the form of invocation ought to be arranged according to the number of persons assembled ; for it is said, 'Bless ye God in the congregations, the Lord, ye who spring from the fountain of Israel.' R. Akivah saith, 'How do we find it at the synagogue ? whether there be many or few assembled the minister says, "Bless ye the Lord."' R. Ishmael saith, 'Bless ye the Lord, who is ever blessed.' When three men have eaten together they are not at liberty to separate without joining in the grace ; neither may four or five, but six may divide into two parties, and so may any number up to ten. But ten may not separate without joining in the grace, nor may any number less than twenty, who can again form two parties. If two separate parties have dined in the same house, should some of each party be able to see some of the other company, they may join in the grace ; but if they cannot so see each other, each party says the grace by itself. The blessing on the wine should not be said until it has been mixed with water. Such is the dictum of R. Eleazar ; but the sages say the blessing may be said [without its being mixed]."—*The Mishna.*

584.—JOT OR TITTLE.—*Matt. v. 18.*

The *jot*, or more properly *yod*, that is mentioned here is one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, equal in power to our *y*, and sometimes *i*. The tittle was merely a small stroke or curl in some of the letters, such as was made to distinguish two letters otherwise alike, as **ב** (*b*) from **כ** (*ch*). In all matters relating to the text, the form of the letters, their

position, the length of lines, etc., the Jewish scribes were scrupulously and superstitiously nice, believing, as they did, that every letter, every mark, had some symbolical meaning. In a Jewish work the Book of Deuteronomy is represented prostrating itself before God, and complaining that Solomon had robbed it of the letter *yod* by taking many wives. God answered that Solomon shall perish, but not the letter *yod*. This fanciful charge against Solomon is grounded on the fact that the word *wife* in Hebrew does not contain the *yod*, but the plural of the word does. He, then, who takes one wife takes not the *yod*, but he who marries more than one does. This fanciful story aptly illustrates the proverbial language which the great teacher employed in setting forth the permanence of the Divine law. Another statement of the Jews will still further illustrate the same. The Rabbis held that the Divine word was perfect, even to the letter, and that nothing could be taken away, nothing added, without marring its beauty. Now the names of Abraham and Sarah were changed, and there *appears* to have been a breach made in the record. "Not so," say the Rabbis, "the *yod* taken from the name Sarai was divided in twain, one half being given to Abraham, the other to Sarah, because, used as a numeral, the *yod* equals 10, whereas the *h* equals only 5." These trifles, since they reveal the modes of thought among the Jews, throw some light on important things.

585.—THE WHITE STONE.—*Rev. ii. 17.*

Some suppose that the reference is to the *tessera hospitalis*, the tally or token of hospitality employed by the ancients. At a time when houses of public entertainment were less common, private hospitality was the more necessary. When one person was received kindly by another, or a contract of friendship was entered into, the *tessera* was given. It was so named from its shape, being four-sided; it was sometimes of wood, sometimes of stone; it was divided into two by the contracting parties; each wrote his own name on half of the *tessera*; then they exchanged pieces, and therefore the name or device on the piece of the *tessera* which each received was the name the other person had written upon it, and which no one else knew but him who received it. It was carefully prized, and entitled the bearer to protection and hospitality. Plautus, in one of his plays, refers to this custom. Hanno inquires of a stranger where he may find Agorastocles, and discovers to his surprise that he is addressing the object of

his search. "If so," he says, "compare, if you please, this hospitable *tessera*: here it is; I have it with me." Agorastocles replies, "It is the exact counterpart; I have the other part at home." Hanno responds, "O my friend, I rejoice to meet thee; thy father was my friend, my guest; I divided with him this hospitable *tessera*." "Therefore," said Agorastocles, "thou shalt have a home with me, for I reverence hospitality."

586.—HORROR OF DARKNESS.—*Gen. xv. 12.*

The well-known Eastern travellers, Messrs. Irby and Mangles, thus illustrate the fear of darkness which seems to be peculiar and intense in the East:—"Having bathed, and dined on bread and cheese, we set out on our return to the bark, our guides urging us to be quick, lest we should be benighted; they said the serpents and other venomous reptiles always came down by night to drink, and they were apprehensive that we should tread on them; they also said that we should meet the robbers at night. These people have a remarkable aversion to being caught in the dark. I remember when at Dendera, our servant, an Arab, hurried off and left us behind, when he thought we should be late in returning to our boat. And whenever our lights have gone out in a tomb or temple, the Arabs have always clapped their hands, and made a noise to keep their spirits up, till the light returned."

587.—RABBINICAL SABBATH-LAWS.—*John v. 10.*

The Rabbis reduced to thirty-nine items all that was forbidden on the Sabbath:—"To till the ground; to sow; to reap; to make hay; to bind sheaves of corn; to thresh; to winnow; to grind; to sift meal; to knead dough; to bake; to shear; to whiten, comb, or card wool; to spin; to twine; to twist; to warp; to dye; to tie; to untie; to sew; to tear, or pull in pieces; to build; to pull down; to knock with a hammer; to hunt, or fish; to kill a beast; to flay it; to dress it; to scrape the skin; to tan it; to cut leather; to write; to scratch out [writing]; to rule paper for writing; to light a fire; to extinguish a fire; to carry anything from place to place; to expose anything for sale."

588.—GENTILE IDEAS OF MEEKNESS.—*Matt. v. 5.*

Meekness, though one of the prime graces of Christianity, has never been very strongly insisted upon by Gentile philosophers. Still, what some of them have to say upon

the subject is worthy of special regard, and may not be altogether without use even to Christians. Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, says :—“The excess [of meekness] might be called a species of irascibility ; for the passion which meekness subdues is anger, and things that cause it are many and various. He, therefore, who feels anger on proper occasions, towards proper persons, and besides in a proper manner, is an object of praise. This character will therefore be the meek man, in the very points in which meekness is laudable. For by the meek man we mean him who is undisturbed, and not carried away by passion, but who feels anger according to the dictates of reason, and for a proper length of time. But the meek man seems to err rather on the side of defect ; for he is not inclined to revenge, but rather to forgive. But the defect, whether it be a kind of insensibility to anger, or whatever it be, is blamed ; for those who do not feel anger in proper cases are thought to be fools, as well as those who do not feel it in a proper manner, nor at the proper time, nor towards proper persons ; for such a one seems to have no perception, nor sense of pain ; and from his insensibility to anger he is not disposed to defend himself. It is like a slave to endure insults when offered to oneself, or to overlook them when offered to one's relations.”

580.—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SODOMITES.—*Gen. xix. 24.*

The Mohammedans have a curious version of this event. They say that Lot was sent to the “cities of the plain” by God, in order to reclaim them from their unnatural abominations. The duty of preacher of righteousness he performed faithfully for twenty years without success. Therefore God sent the angel Gabriel and two others to exterminate them. Gabriel going under the foundations of those cities, lifted them in the air, and then let them fall to the earth, and all the inhabitants were crushed to pieces under the ruins, God intending that their punishment should bear some proportion to their crime. After this overthrow, God showered down upon them hot burning stones, baked in the furnaces of hell, on each stone the name of some guilty one was written, and on him it fell. In this manner, all who were out of the cities at the time of the overthrow were destroyed. One Sodomite happened by chance to be in the temple of Mecca—which Mohammedans say was built by Abraham—at the time of the catastrophe, where he dwelt securely for forty days, but no

sooner did he leave the sacred shelter of the temple, than he was struck down and killed by one of those burning bolts.

590.—FEMALE FINERY IN THE TIME OF ISAIAH.
Isaiah iii. 18—23.

Delitzsch thus paraphrases and explains this very difficult passage :—“ On that day the Lord will put away the show of the ankle-clasps, and of the head-bands, and of the crescents ; the ear-rings, and the arm-chains, and the light veils ; the diadems, and the stepping-chains, and the girdles, and the smelling-bottles, and the amulets ; the finger-rings and the nose-rings ; the gala-dresses, and the sleeve-frocks, and the wrappers, and the pockets ; the hand-mirrors, and the Sindu-cloths, and the turbans, and the gauze mantles.’ ‘ Ankle-clasps :’ rings of gold, silver, or ivory, worn round the ankles. ‘ Head-bands,’ or frontlets : plaited bands of gold or silver thread worn below the hair-net, and reaching from one ear to the other ; or were sun-like balls, which were worn as ornaments round the neck. ‘ Crescents :’ little pendants of this kind fastened round the neck and hanging down upon the breast (in Judg. viii. 21 we meet with them as ornaments hung round the camels’ necks). Such ornaments are still worn by Arabian girls, who generally have several different kinds of them. ‘ Ear-rings :’ we meet with these in Judg. viii. 26, as an ornament worn by Midianitish kings. ‘ Arm-chains :’ according to the Targum, these were chains worn upon the arm, or spangles upon the wrist, answering to the spangles upon the ankles. ‘ Fluttering-veils :’ these were more expensive than the ordinary veils worn by girls. ‘ Diadems’ are only mentioned in other parts of the Scriptures as being worn by men (*e.g.*, by priests, bridegrooms, or persons of high rank). ‘ Stepping-chains :’ the chain worn to shorten and give elegance to the step. ‘ Girdles :’ dress girdles, such as were worn by brides upon their wedding-day (compare Jer. ii. 32 with Isa. xlix. 18) ; the word is erroneously rendered ‘ hair-pins’ in the Targum. ‘ Smelling-bottles :’ the breath of an aroma. ‘ Amulets :’ gems or metal plates with an inscription upon them, which were worn as a protection as well as an ornament. ‘ Finger-rings :’ or signet-rings worn upon the finger. ‘ Nose-rings’ were fastened in the central division of the nose, and hung down over the mouth : they have been ornaments in common use in the East from the time of the patriarchs (Gen. xxiv. 22) down to the present day. ‘ Gala-dresses’ are dresses not usually worn,

but taken off when at home. ‘Sleeve-frocks :’ the second tunic, worn above the ordinary one—the Roman *stola*. ‘Wrappers :’ broad cloths wrapped round the body. ‘Pockets’ were for holding money (2 Kings v. 23), which was generally carried by men in the girdle or in a purse. ‘Hand-mirrors :’ the Septuagint renders this Lacedæmonian gauze or transparent dresses, which showed the nakedness rather than concealed it; but the better rendering is, mirrors with handles; polished metal plates. ‘Sindu-cloths’ (*sedinim*), veils or coverings of the finest linen, viz., of Sindu or Hindu cloth—Sindu, the land of Indus, being the earlier name of India. [The ‘*Mishna*’ (*Kelim* xxiv. 13) mentions three different *sedinim*: night-dresses, curtains, and embroidery. The *sindon* is frequently referred to as a covering wrapped round the person; and in *b. Menechoth*, 41 a, it is stated that the *sindon* is the summer dress, the *sarbal* (cloak) the winter dress, which may help to explain Mark xiv. 51, 52.] ‘Turbans :’ the head-dress composed of twisted cloths of different colours. ‘Gauze-mantles :’ delicate veil-like mantles thrown over the rest of the clothes. Stockings and handkerchiefs are not mentioned; the former were first introduced into Hither Asia from Media long after Isaiah’s time; and a Jerusalem lady no more thought of using the latter than a Grecian or Roman lady did.”

591.—SHOWERS OF HAILSTONES.—*Joshua* x. 11.

There are records of the fall of more than hailstones. In Normandy, in 1803, there was a fall of stones, containing an alloy of iron and nickel, some of which are declared to have weighed from ten to seventeen pounds each. There are also records of truly awful hailstorms, one of which is fully described by Commodore Porter, envoy at the Turkish Court. It occurred at Constantinople, in 1831 :—

“ We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way (down the Bosphorus) when a cloud rising in the west gave indication of an approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and of a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some gulls near, I supposed it to be them darting for fish, but soon after discovered that they were large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder, or ten thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosphorus was in a foam, as though heaven’s artillery had been discharged upon us and

our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable; our umbrellas were raised to protect us, the lumps of ice stripped them into ribands. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled, and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of the three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed, another much injured in the shoulder, and all more or less injured. A smaller kaick accompanied, with my two servants. They were both disabled, and are now in bed with their wounds; the kaick was terribly bruised. It was the most awful and terrific scene that I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I should ever be exposed to such another. Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boat; and some of them came with such violence as certainly to have broken an arm or leg, had they struck us in those parts. One of them struck the blade of an oar and split it. The scene lasted may be five minutes, but it was five minutes of the most awful feeling that I ever experienced. When it passed over, we found the surrounding hills covered with masses of ice, I cannot call it hail; the trees stripped of their leaves and limbs, and everything looking desolate. We proceeded on our course, however, and arrived at our destination drenched and awe-struck. The ruin had not extended so far as Candalie, and it was difficult to make them comprehend the cause of the nervous and agitated condition in which we arrived. The Reis Effendi asked me if I was ever so agitated when in action? I answered, No; for then I had something to excite me, and only human means to oppose. He asked the minister (who was standing by his side, and who had been at sea) if he ever was so affected in a gale of wind at sea? He answered, No; for then he could exercise his skill to disarm or render harmless the elements. He asked him why he should be so affected now? He replied, 'From the awful idea of being crushed to death by the hand of God with stones from heaven, when resistance would be vain, and when it would be impious to be brave.' He clasped his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, 'God is great!'

"I returned to the beautiful village of Buyukdere. The sun was out in all its splendour; at a distance all looked smiling and charming; but a nearer approach discovered roofs covered with workmen repairing the broken tiles, desolated vineyards, and shattered windows. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village, and I have heard of broken bones in abundance. Many of the thick brick tiles with which my roof is covered are smashed to atoms; and my

house was inundated by the rain that succeeded this visitation. It is impossible to convey an idea of what it was. Imagine to yourself, however, the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the earth. My own servants weighed several pieces of three-quarters of a pound, and many were found by others of upwards of a pound. There were many which fell around the boat in which I was, that appeared to me to be as large as the swell of a large-sized water decanter."

592.—THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES THE JUST.—*Matt. x. 3.*

James the Just, or James the son of Alphæus, was stoned by the Jews. It is said that his martyrdom took place in the following manner. The Gospel had spread by this time so rapidly in Judæa, that the Jews were alarmed, and Ananias the high-priest resolved to put James to death. He called James before the Sanhedrim, represented to him how the people were being deceived and led into error respecting the Messiahship of Jesus, and told him it was in his power to undeceive them, as everybody was prepared to believe what he said. They made him, therefore, go up into one of the galleries of the temple, where he might be heard by the whole multitude assembled from all parts to keep the passover. The people, when they saw him, cried out, "Tell us, thou just man, what we should believe concerning Jesus who was crucified." James answered with a loud voice, "Jesus the Son of man, whom you speak of, is now seated at the right hand of the Supreme Majesty, as Son of God, and must one day come, borne upon the clouds of heaven." At these words, many gave glory to God, crying out, Hosanna! But the Pharisees and doctors exclaimed, "What, is he whom we call the Just likewise mistaken?" and going up to where he stood, they hurled him down. Not being killed by the fall, James kneeled on the ground and prayed for his murderers; and at length was despatched by a fuller.

593.—CHRIST THE WORD.—*John i. 1.*

The phrase "Word of the Lord," or "Word" or *Logos*, as applied to Christ, has created some little difficulty, there being nothing in the Bible itself that gives a direct answer to the inquiry, How did it originate? In Abyssinia, Bruce found a curious custom which may hint at the primary and literal sense of the expression. Formerly, no part of the king

was ever seen by the people except occasionally the foot. He held audiences by sitting within a covered place, a man standing near and conveying the king's messages, which he heard from the royal lips through a hole made for that purpose, to the assembled people. This officer was called *Kal Hatze*, "The voice or word of the king." The custom was dying out in Bruce's time. But the *Kal Hatze* beautifully illustrates the position and office of Christ, who says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son hath declared Him."

594.—THE LEGEND OF SETH.—*Gen.* iv. 25.

An Apocryphal book, well known in the early Church, and called the "Lesser Genesis," says, that Seth, when forty years of age, was rapt up into heaven by angels, and was there told of the crime the watchers (so the "Book of Enoch" calls the "sons of God," mentioned in the sixth chapter of Genesis) would commit. The deluge was also made known to him, and the coming of the Saviour of the world. Those revelations Seth made known to his parents. The posterity of Seth, the book goes on to say, continued for 1,000 years in a country just above Eden, where they lived in profound peace and prosperity; but the devil, being envious of their happiness and innocence, seduced them by the charms of the "daughters of men." This was evidently the same event as Moses describes by saying that the sons of God married the daughters of men. This book also says that Seth, at the age of 191, married his sister Azura.

595.—CUSTOMS CONNECTED WITH ADOPTION.—*Gal.* iv. 5.

The ceremony of adoption among the ancient Romans was effected under the authority of a magistrate, before whom, by the legal form, *in jure cessio*, the child was formally surrendered by his natural, into the hands of his adoptive, father. Originally, it could only be accomplished by a vote of the people in public assembly. Under the emperors, it required only an imperial rescript. All the property of an adopted son passed over to the adoptive father, who must, by the Roman law, be a person who had no children, and no reasonable hope of having any. It was not allowed a woman to adopt, for even her own children were not regarded as legally in her own power. In the East, the ceremony of adoption is very simple, the parties merely exchanging girdles with one another. Among the Mohammedans, the adopted was made to pass

through the shirt of the person adopting him. A custom somewhat analogous is found in ancient times. Thus Aaron invested his son Eleazar with the priestly garments which he had himself worn, in token of his adoption to the office of the high-priesthood. Elijah, also, when ascending to heaven, threw his mantle over the shoulder of his successor, Elisha.

596.—PICTURES OF SILVER.—*Prov. xxv. 11.*

Nearly everything in this verse has an uncertain meaning. It is not possible to decide what fruit is alluded to; and if that difficulty were removed, nothing could be said of “setting” fruit in silver pictures. The most probable theory is, that some kind of orange is meant; and that the writer compares an apt expression to oranges or citrons in *baskets* of silver. But it is not known whether the Jews ever used silver baskets for such a purpose; if they did, the simile is sufficiently plain.

597.—TATTOOING, OR PRINTING MARKS.—*Lev. xix. 28.*

The Hebrews must have been acquainted with the tattooing customs of the Egyptians, which remain to the present day, and which Mr. Lane thus elaborately describes:—“The females of the higher and middle classes, and many of the poorer women, stain certain parts of their hands and feet (which are, with very few exceptions, beautifully formed) with the leaves of the hennà-tree, which impart a yellowish red or deep orange colour. Many thus dye only the nails of their fingers and toes; others extend the dye as high as the first joint of each finger and toe; some also make a stripe along the next row of joints; and there are several other fanciful modes of applying the hennà; but the most common practice is to dye the tips of the fingers and toes as high as the first joint, and the whole of the inside of the hand and the sole of the foot; adding, though not always, the stripe above mentioned along the middle joints of the fingers, and a similar stripe a little above the toes. The hennà is prepared for this use merely by being powdered, and mixed with a little water, so as to form a paste. Some of this paste being spread in the palm of the hand, and on other parts of it which are to be dyed, and the fingers being doubled, and their extremities inserted into the paste in the palm, the whole hand is tightly bound with linen, and remains thus during a whole night. In a similar manner it is applied to the feet. The colour does not disappear until after many days; it is generally renewed after about a fortnight or three weeks. This custom prevails

not only in Egypt, but in several other countries of the East, which are supplied with hennà from the banks of the Nile. To the nails the hennà imparts a more bright, clear, and permanent colour than to the skin. When this dye alone is applied to the nails, or to a larger portion of the fingers and toes, it may, with some reason, be regarded as an embellishment ; for it makes the general complexion of the hand and foot appear more delicate ; but many ladies stain their hands in a manner much less agreeable to our taste, by applying, immediately after the removal of the paste of hennà, another paste composed of quicklime, common smoke-black, and linseed-oil ; they convert the tint of the hennà to a black, or to a blackish-olive hue. Ladies in Egypt are often seen with their nails stained with this colour, or with their fingers of the same dark hue from the extremity to the first joint, red from the first to the second joint, and of the former colour, from the second to the third joint ; with the palm also stained in a similar manner, leaving a broad, dark stripe across the middle, and the rest red ; the thumb dark from the extremity to the first joint, and red from the first to the second joint. Some, after a more simple fashion, blacken the ends of the fingers and the whole of the inside of the hand. Among the females of the lower orders, in the country towns and the villages of Egypt, and among the same classes in the metropolis, but in a less degree, prevails a custom somewhat similar to that above described : it consists in making indelible marks of a blue or greenish hue upon the face and other parts, or, at least, upon the front of the chin, and upon the back of the right hand, and often also upon the left hand, the right arm, or both arms, the feet, the middle of the bosom, and the forehead : the most common of these marks are made upon the chin and hands. The operation is performed with several needles (generally seven) tied together ; with these the skin is pricked in the desired pattern ; some smoke-black (of wood or oil), mixed with milk from the breast of a woman, is then rubbed in ; and about a week after, before the skin has healed, a paste of the pounded fresh leaves of white beet or clover is applied, and gives a blue or greenish colour to the marks ; or, to produce the same effect in a more simple manner, some indigo is rubbed into the punctures, instead of the smoke-black, etc. It is generally performed at the age of about five or six years, and by gipsy-women. The term applied to it is ‘dakk.’ Most of the females of the higher parts of Upper Egypt (who are of a very dark complexion), for the purpose of

making their teeth to glisten, tattoo their lips instead of the parts above mentioned ; thus converting their natural colour to a dull, bluish hue, which, to the eye of a stranger, is extremely displeasing."

598.—LUCIAN'S LEGEND OF THE DELUGE.—*Gen. viii. 18.*

Lucian, a Greek writer, who lived in the second century, A.D., relates a curious legend of the Deluge. He says : "In the days of the Scythian Deucalion, all mankind perished in a general inundation of the earth." Then speaking of the temple of Hierapolis, in Syria, he relates that many people affirm that Deucalion erected the temple there ; and then proceeds to give the story as he had heard it from the Greeks : "The present race of men," say they, "is not the first, for they totally perished ; but it is of a second generation, which, being descended from Deucalion, has increased to a great multitude. The former race of men were insolent, and addicted to unjust actions ; for they neither kept their oaths, nor were hospitable to strangers, nor gave ear to suppliants ; for which reason this great calamity befell them. On a sudden the earth poured forth a vast quantity of water, great showers fell, the rivers overflowed, and the sea rose to a prodigious height ; so that all things became water, and all men were destroyed : only Deucalion was left to a second generation. On account of his prudence and piety, he was saved in this manner : He went into a large ark or chest which he had fabricated, together with his sons and their wives ; and when he was in there entered swine, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other creatures which live on earth, by pairs. He received them all, and they did him no hurt ; for the gods created a great friendship among them, so that they sailed all in one chest while the waters prevailed. These things the Greeks relate of Deucalion ; but as to what happened after this, there is an ancient tradition among those of Hierapolis which is wonderful, viz., that in their country a great chasm opened and received all the water ; whereupon Deucalion erected altars and built the temple of Juno over the chasm. This chasm I have seen, and it is a very small one, under the temple : whether it was formerly greater and since lessened, I cannot tell ; but that which I have seen is not large. In commemoration of the history they practised this ceremonial rite : Twice in every year water is brought from the sea to the temple, and not by the priests only, but by the inhabitants of

all Syria and Arabia; many (even) come from beyond Euphrates to the sea, and all carry water, which they first pour out in the temple, and afterwards it sinks in the chasm, which, though it be small, receives abundance of water. And when they do this, they say Deucalion instituted the ceremony in the temple as a memorial of the calamity and of his deliverance from it."

599.—SYCHAR.—*John iv. 5.*

The derivation of the word Sychar is very uncertain, though from what St. John says, it might possibly be a nickname for the city which bore it. A recent writer observes that the name may be derived from the Hebrew *Sheker*, "a lie," alluding to the false worship on Mount Gerizim; or from *Shikkōr*, "drunken," in allusion possibly to Isaiah's denunciation, "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim" (xxviii. 1), Sychar being situated in Mount Ephraim; or it may be from *Sūkar*, "the tomb," from Joseph's sepulchre, which is very near the city.

600.—THE SOLDIER WHO PIERCED CHRIST'S SIDE.

John xix. 34.

In the legendary lore of the Church, the soldier who pierced the side of Christ with the spear has been called Longinus. This man, it is said, was one of the soldiers appointed to guard the cross, and was converted by the miracles which attended the crucifixion. He was also set with the band who watched the sepulchre, and was the only one who refused to be bribed by money to say that the body of Christ had been stolen by the disciples. For his fidelity to the truth, Pilate resolved on his destruction; but for a time Longinus managed to escape. He left the army to devote himself entirely to the work of the Gospel, but he did this without getting a legal discharge from military life. He and two of his fellow-soldiers retired to Cappadocia, where they began to preach the Gospel; but, at the instigation of the Jews, Pilate sent after them as deserters, beheaded them, and had their heads brought to him at Jerusalem.

601.—LITTLE VALUE SET ON TREES IN THE EAST.

Matt. iii. 10.

The remarkably broad statement implied in this bold figure of speech must strike a European as somewhat extraordinary; and yet there is more of *literal* truth in it than one would at

first thought be disposed to imagine. The fact is, in Western Asia, trees, as trees, are but little valued. The fruit trees are preserved and nourished with great care ; but nearly all other trees are cut down for fuel, mineral fuel being exceedingly scarce. There is an exception to the rule in favour of poplars : these are permitted to grow to their full height, for the sake of the long beams they supply ; and they are not generally “hewn down” till required for building purposes. It appears that the Syrians never plant any trees except fruit trees and the various kinds they plant around the graves of the dead, and these latter are safe from profanation.

602.—KNEADING TROUGH OF THE ARABS.—*Exod.* xii. 34.

“ Meanwhile we watched the Arabs baking bread for their evening meal, around their own camp fire. They reduce the wood as rapidly as possible to embers, then they add a large quantity of camels’ dung, which, when completely ignited, throws out a very strong heat. During the time the fire is being brought to a proper state, they make flour by bruising wheat or Indian corn between two stones, then, mixing it with water, form it into dough in small wooden troughs or bowls, which they always carry along with them. Each wears round his shoulders a sheepskin, which serves the double purpose of a cloak and a baking board ; this is spread, fleece downwards, on the ground, and the dough is kneaded upon it into the form of a large round cake, or what in Scotland is called a *bannock* ; the glowing embers are then swept back from their place, the cake is laid on the well-heated ground, and completely covered over by the ashes which have been temporarily removed. The cake is allowed to remain about ten minutes in this primitive oven, and it is then pulled out, fully baked, and ready for use, a smart tap or two with a stick, on either side, removing any dust which may adhere to it. They brought one of their cakes, begging us to taste it, which we did, and found it excellent. I was much interested in this scene, not only from the insight it afforded into the customs of the Bedouins of the Desert, but also from a strong conviction that we witnessed the very mode in which, thousands of years before, the Israelites had baked their bread in this very desert while the stock of flour or corn they brought with them out of Egypt lasted ; or rather, the manner in which they had been accustomed to bake their bread while still in slavery ‘in the house of bondage.’ Is it not more than probable that these little wooden bowls now in use are just ‘the kneading troughs’ we read of as being

carried by the Israelites on their shoulders, in Exod. xii. 34 : ‘The people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.’ And, in the desert at least, what other mode could they have of preparing it than that now practised by its hardy sons ? This baking operation is performed twice a day—in the morning, before they start, and at night, when the day’s journey is over ; and no other food do they eat from the beginning to the end of the year, except when, on some great occasion, they resolve to slaughter a sheep or a young camel. When they have been too tired and sleepy to bake in the morning, before setting out, I have seen them send forward one of their number with the necessary apparatus—who, from the great speed with which they walk, was soon out of sight—and an hour afterwards, when we came up to him, the bread was baked, or, if not quite ready, we passed on without stopping, and he soon overtook us with the morning rations for the whole party.”—*Stewart’s “The Tent and the Khan.”*

603.—LIMITING THE COMMANDMENTS TO BRIEF SENTENCES. *Matt. xxii. 40.*

Our Lord sums up the obligations of the Moral Law in perfect love to God and man. Some conception that the ten laws rested on some fundamental principle, which could be briefly and succinctly expressed, appears to have been reached by the Jews.

The *Talmud* says :—“Six hundred and thirteen injunctions was Moses instructed to give to the people. David reduced them all to eleven in the fifteenth Psalm : ‘Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle ? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill ? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.’

“The prophet Isaiah reduced them to six, viz., ‘He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil’ (Is. xxxiii. 15).

"The prophet Micah reduced them to three, viz., 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (Micah vi. 8.)

"Isaiah once more reduced them to two, viz., 'Keep ye judgment and do justice' (lvi. 1).

"Amos reduced them all to one, viz., 'Seek ye Me, and ye shall live' (Amos v. 4).

"But, lest it might be supposed from this that God could be found in the fulfilment of His whole law only, Habbakuk said, 'The just shall live by his faith' (Hab. ii. 4)."

604.—SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN.—*Gen. vi. 2.*

No satisfactory explanation of these terms has yet been given. The following popular Jewish traditions connected with the story are curious and interesting, though they may add very little to the solution of the difficulty:—"It happened after the sons of men had multiplied in those days, that daughters were born to them, elegant and beautiful. And when the angels (the sons of heaven) beheld them, they became enamoured of them, saying to each other, 'Come, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men.' . . . Then their leader, Samyaza, said to them, 'I fear that you may perhaps be indisposed to the performance of this enterprise, and that I alone shall suffer for so grievous a crime.' But they answered him, and said, 'We all swear, and bind ourselves by mutual execrations, that we will not change our intention, but execute our projected undertaking.' Then they all swore together, and bound themselves by mutual execrations. Their whole number was two hundred, who descended upon Ardis, which is the top of Mount Armon (? Hermon). . . . These were the names of their chiefs: Samyaza was their leader; Urakabaramel, Akibeel, Tamiel, Ramnel, Danel, Azkeel, Sarakuyal, Asael, Armers, Batraal, Anane, Zavebe, Samsaveel, Ertael, Zurel, Yomyael, Arazyal. These were the prefects of the two hundred angels, and the remainder were all with them. Then they took wives, each choosing for himself, . . . teaching them sorcery, incantations, and the dividing of roots and trees. . . . And the women . . . brought forth giants. . . . These devoured all which the labour of men produced, until it became impossible to feed them, when they turned themselves against men, in order to devour them; and began to injure birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes, to eat their flesh one after another, and to drink their blood."

The above tradition is preserved in the "Book of Enoch." This book was written probably many years before the birth of Christ, and was well known in the early Church, many of the ancient Christian writers having quoted it. It was, however, lost for 1,300 or 1,400 years to Europeans, and only restored to them in the last century by Bruce, who found it in Abyssinia. He brought home several MSS. of the work, written in the Ethiopic language. The "Book of Enoch" for the past half century has existed in English, and the wonder is that it is not more read, for it is one of the most interesting portions of Jewish literature.

605.—AN EXTRAORDINARY FEAST.—*Esther i. 3, 4.*

Kitto says, "The duration of this feast is very extraordinary. It continued for half a year, as the Persian year consisted of 360 days. There are few examples of any festivals of such long duration. The apocryphal book of Judith records, that Nabuchodonosor, the Assyrian, after his victory over Arphaxad, banqueted all his army, comprising a multitude of men out of various nations, a hundred and twenty days at Nineveh. The most remarkable parallel instance of protracted and abundant feasting is that of a Gaul, named Ariamnes, who undertook to feast all the Gaulish nation for an entire year. And he performed his promise; for he caused tents, each capable of containing 300 men, to be pitched at regular distances on all the principal roads, keeping in each of them boilers furnished with all kinds of meat in abundance, as well as vessels full of wine, and a great number of attendants to wait upon the guests and supply all their wants."

606.—AN EXPLANATION OF CURSING THE FIG-TREE.
Matt. xxi. 18, 19.

This is a difficult passage, and one the commentators have never satisfactorily explained. A recent author says: "Most interpretations do injustice to the character of our Lord, or misrepresent the nature of the tree. Among the latter, the most extraordinary statement is that of a very respectable authority, who affirms that it was customary to plant fig-trees by the road-side, because it was thought that the dust, by absorbing the excessive sap, increased the productiveness of the tree. Others have asserted that, as this particular tree grew by the road-side, it could not have any particular owner. Such are not aware that in Western Asia every

fruit-bearing tree, wherever it stands, has an owner, who is often not the proprietor of the soil whereon it grows. . . . Other commentators maintain that this tree was wild, not knowing probably that the fruit of such cannot be eaten. Others, again, state that there was an early crop, imagining that the tree yields two crops annually. . . . In presenting an interpretation of this difficult passage, which may not lie open to the foregoing objections, by harmonising at once the character of our Lord with all the facts in the case, we would suggest that it is but a fragmentary account. . . . On the path which leads from Bethany, over the top of Olivet, to Jerusalem, stood a fig-tree by the way-side. It was of the kind [the fruit of] which is eaten green or fresh. Now it often happens that some of the fruit, being hidden by the leaves, is not picked, and it comes in sight when the leaves drop off in the coming winter. These figs (thus left on the tree) become dry and dark, and when the fresh green leaves come out in March they can easily be distinguished by their colour. Almost every fig-tree has thus some fruit left upon its topmost branches until the ensuing season. They are, indeed, poor fare, even for the poorest ; but our Lord belonged to the latter class. He had passed that way not long before, and had either seen them or plucked and eaten some of them. The owner of the tree may have been an enemy, or he may simply have been vexed by the sight of strangers who went 'across lots' along the shortest path, instead of taking the high road to Jericho ; climbing on his trees, and picking the old figs of last year, to the danger of injuring the young shoots and blossoms of the present crop. He cared not that Moses allowed them (Deut. xxiv. 19—21). So he shook off and threw away the remaining figs. Our Lord . . . punished the churlish owner in faithfulness to his soul, just as He had punished the Gadarenes for keeping unclean animals by letting the 'legion of devils' go into the swine."

607.—EGYPTIAN EMBALMING.—*Gen. l. 2.*

It is well known that the Egyptians were in the habit of embalming their dead, and the bodies of both Jacob and Joseph, who died in Egypt, were treated in this manner. There were several processes by which the Egyptians accomplished their object, and they are full of interest. When a person of any consequence died, his female relatives beplastered their heads, and even their faces at times, with mud, and in that state wandered through the city, their dresses fastened by

a band, their breasts bare, and beating themselves as they went. The men followed the example of the women, and when these ceremonies were over the body was carried away to be embalmed. In the account of the death of Jacob it is said that Joseph gave orders to the physicians to embalm the body. They were a kind of undertakers who made embalming and the preparation of sarcophagi their special business. The undertakers, when the body was brought to them, showed the relatives various models of corpses made of wood, the best being models of Osiris, an Egyptian god. These were shown to the bearers, and then the undertakers asked after which model they desired the mummy to be made up; the bargain being concluded, the bearers left the corpse in the hands of the undertakers. They next set to work to extract the brain through the nostrils by means of a hooked iron, rinsing out the skull with certain drugs to destroy any portions that could not be extracted. A scribe next made a mark along the left flank of the body and a *dissector* cut open the side with a sharp stone, and then, as some report, he fled for his life, followed by a shower of stones thrown by the bystanders to express their horror of his deed. This, however, must have been mere form, as also the use of a sharp stone in preference to a metal knife. As soon as the incision had been made the intestines were extracted. They were immediately cleansed by palm wine and aromatic preparations, and replaced in the body. Four wax figures of four genii were also inserted with them, when the viscera were not, as was often the case, deposited in vases and so placed in the tomb. Everything belonging to the body was buried. After the incision in the side had been sewed up the body was placed in natron or the subcarbonate of soda, which abounds in the Libyan desert and in Upper Egypt, and remained covered over with it from thirty to forty days (Gen. i. 3), the whole time of mourning occupying seventy or seventy-two days. When the body was taken from the natron it was washed and then wrapped round from head to foot with bandages of fine linen, covered with gum. The corpse was then given back to the relatives, who enclosed it in a wooden mummy-case and placed it in a sepulchral chamber, upright against the wall. This method of embalming was the most expensive, and cost nearly £250 per corpse, an enormous sum considering the great value of money in those days. There were other modes, however, which were much less expensive, and that practised by the poor must have cost but little.

608.—SCRIBES, OR SOPHERIM.—*Matt. vii. 29.*

The Scribes or Sopherim were known among the Jews as a distinct body, from the time of Ezra. When the Jews returned from captivity they had, it appears, forgotten the old Hebrew language, or else had lost the true explanation of the Law, and it became necessary for those who had learned in those matters to expound the meaning of what was read in public to the people. When Ezra read the Law to the new generation, who appear never to have heard it read before, those who stood with him on the platform acted as interpreters and gave the people the sense of what was being read (*Neh. viii. 5—8*). Henceforth there appears to have been a continuous demand for expounders, and by-and-by they formed a school or college, known as the Great Synagogue. Their object was to make the law of Moses the sole rule and guide in all matters, religious, social, moral, and national. Their interpretation became the one “science” of the nation, compared with which all else was dross. Step by step they proceeded ; question after question arose and was answered ; the work grew under their hands, till eventually the Law itself was completely buried under the mound of expository *débris* which generations of Scribes had heaped upon it. A great deal could be said in their favour : they no doubt wrought with good intentions, and to them the Church owed the power to understand the books of the Old Testament. But their science proved their bane ; it enslaved and fossilised them, and the national life must have become fossilised as well but for the rise of several sects and schisms which opened new fields for the action of the people’s thought and energy. The self-imposed duty of the Scribes consisted in copying, reading, amending, explaining, and protecting the Law. To accomplish the last they invented the “fences,” which by-and-by were called the “words of the Scribes,” and formed the nucleus of the “tradition of the elders” (*Matt. xv. 2 ; Gal. i. 14*). The Oral Law, or “Law of the Lip,” in contrast with the “Law which is in writing,” was eventually declared to be so sacred, that to transgress it was more heinous than to transgress the commands of the Bible itself. The Sopherim proper died out about 300 B.C., but they were followed by another set of Scribes of a lower grade, who added nothing to the Oral Law, but merely arranged it, and taught it to the people. Those were the narrow-minded men whom our Saviour so frequently denounced, together with the Pharisees.

609.—FLESH NOT TO BE BOILED IN MILK.—*Deut. xiv. 21.*

The following very curious Rabbinical regulations are taken from the *Mishna*:—“It is prohibited to boil any kind of flesh in milk, except that of locusts and fish; neither may meat and cheese be brought to table together, except locusts and fish. A person who vowed not to eat meat, may eat locusts and fish. Fowl and cheese may, according to Beth Shammai, be brought to table together, but may not be eaten together; but, according to Beth Hillel, they may neither be brought to table nor be eaten together. R. José saith, ‘This is one of the cases in which Beth Shammai decides in a less rigid manner than Beth Hillel.’ What kind of table is here alluded to? The table on which the person is eating; but on the dresser on which food is prepared both kinds may without apprehension be placed near to each other. Meat and cheese may be wrapped up together in one cloth, if they do not touch each other. Rabbon Simeon ben Gamaliel saith, ‘Two guests [at an inn or ordinary] may, without apprehension, eat at the same table, one of them meat and the other cheese.’ When a drop of milk fell upon a piece of meat in a pan, all the meat therein is prohibited if it could have communicated its flavour to the meat; but if the contents of the pot had been immediately stirred together after the milk fell into it, if it imparted its flavour to the whole, the contents of the pot are prohibited. The udder of a cow or goat, etc., must be torn, and the milk be pressed out of it; but if it had not been torn, the person who eats it has not transgressed; the heart must also be torn and the blood pressed out. If it had not been torn, the person who eats it thus has not transgressed; and he who has fowl and cheese brought to table together has not transgressed the negative commandment. It is prohibited to boil [in milk] or to derive any benefit from the flesh of a clean animal which was boiled in milk of a clean animal; but it is permitted to boil and to reap advantage of flesh of a clean animal boiled in the milk of an unclean one, or of the flesh of an unclean animal boiled in the milk of a clean one. R. Akivah saith, ‘Wild animals and fowls are not specified in the law [as subject to this prohibition]; for it is said, “Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother’s milk;” but this precept was mentioned three times, to include wild animals, fowl and unclean animals.’ R. José the Galilean saith, ‘It is said in Deut. xiv. 21, “Thou shalt not eat of anything that dieth of itself,” [Nebelah]; and it is added immediately, “Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother’s

milk." Consequently, these animals only which are prohibited as *Nebeluh* may not be boiled in milk ; and as it might be supposed that since a fowl may become prohibited as *Nebeluh*, it would therefore be prohibited to boil it in milk, the Scripture uses the expression, "in its *mother's milk*," to except fowl, to which that expression cannot apply.' It is prohibited to use the curdled milk in the maw of an animal slaughtered by a non-Israelite, which is *Nebeluh*. When a person puts milk in the interior membrane of the maw of a Cashér killed animal, if the milk can impart a flavour to it, it is prohibited. The milk in the maw of a Cashér animal, which sucked from one that is *Terefá*, is prohibited ; but the milk of a *Terefá*, which sucked from a Cashér animal, may be used, because the milk remains gathered or enclosed in the intestines."

610.—ANIMAL SUBSTANCES USED AS MEDICINE. *Jer. xlvi. 11.*

Kitto tells us that there were some curious speculations among the ancient Hebrews as to the medical knowledge of Adam, founded on the idea that the knowledge of all creatures, implied in his bestowal of appropriate names upon them, must have comprised a knowledge of their medicinal properties and uses. The mere conjecture shows the extent to which animal substances were applied in the *materia medica* of the Hebrews. In this age, when more potent medicinal agents have been found, it is hard to conceive the extent to which the parts of animals were used, not only by the ancients, but, until a comparatively recent date, by the moderns. Indeed, most of the practices connected with the application of animal simples, which, where found in use among our peasantry are cited as rival superstitions, are often little else than remnants of ancient and legitimate medical practice.

In illustration Kitto quotes from a work bearing the date of 1664 A.D., which sets forth the medicinal uses of most animals, citing ancient and medical authorities for most of the statements, including Jewish medical writers. In this work it is said that "an ape eaten by a lion cureth his diseases." "A little of the water being drunke, of which the cow or asse hath drunke, doth effectually help the headache." "The dried brain of an asse, being drunke daily in water and honey, helpeth the epilepsie in thirty daies." "The heart of a black male asse, being eaten with bread, helpeth the falling sicknesses." "The gall doth asswage the signes of abscesses." "The flesh helpeth against the paine of the backbone and

hipps. The marrow anointed cureth the gout, and easeth the paine. The ashes of the hoofes burned help the falling sicknesse. The dung mixed with the yolk of an egge, and applied to the forehead, stoppeth the fluxe of blood, and, with a bull's gall, curleth the haire." Of the mouse it is said, "The flesh causeth oblivion. A mouse dissected and applied draweth out reeds, darts, and other things that stick in the flesh. Being eaten by children when roasted, they dry up their spittle. The water in which they have been boiled helpeth against the quinsey. The ashes, with honey, used ten daies, clear the eyes. The head, worne in a cloth, helpeth the headache and epilepsie. The liver, roasted in the new of the moon, trieth the epilepsie. The brain, being steeped in wine and applied to the forehead, helpeth the headache," etc. It is curious to notice how animal remedies have given place to mineral and vegetable ones, the great preference being now given to those having a vegetable origin.

611.—ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY.—*Gen. xviii. 2.*

"Mr. Stephens mentions that while in the desert, near Sinai, anticipating not meeting for days with a living creature, himself and his attendants were suddenly cheered by seeing an Arab woman pass before them, and, overtaking her, she recognised in one of his companions a friend of her tribe, and in the same spirit, and almost in the same words which would have been used by her ancestors four thousand years ago, she asked them to her tent (not far from the road, but completely hidden from view), and promised them a lamb or a kid for supper. Her husband was stretched on the ground in front of his tent, and welcomed us with an air and manner that belonged to the desert, but which a king on his throne could not have excelled. He was the embodied personification of all my conceptions of a patriarch: a large loose frock, a striped handkerchief on his head, bare legs, sandals on his feet, and a long white beard. . . . Almost immediately after we were seated, he took his shepherd's crook, and, assisted by his son, selected a lamb from the flock for the evening meal."

612.—ANGELS OF THE CHURCHES.—*Rev. i. 20.*

This title appears to have been borne by the ministers of the synagogues among the Jews. The business of this officer, who was also called a bishop of the congregation, was to offer prayers for the whole assembly, to which the people answered

"Amen ;" and to preach, if there were no other to discharge that office. The reading of the law was not properly his business ; but every Sabbath he called out seven of the synagogue, and on other days fewer, to perform that duty. The angel stood by the person that read, to correct him if he read improperly. He took care also that worship was performed without disorder, and with all regularity. By a name probably borrowed from the synagogue, the bishops or pastors of the seven churches of Asia Minor are termed, in the Book of Revelation, angels of the churches. It is very reasonable to suppose that Paul alludes to this name when he says that women ought to be covered before the angels (1 Cor. xi. 10). Bishops, or ministers of Christian churches, are often called "angels" by the earlier writers.

613.—MODERN TENT LIFE.—*Gen. xxv. 27.*

The following passage from *Shaw's Travels* gives a vivid picture of the tent-life with which the story of the early patriarchs was associated :—“The Bedowees, as their great ancestors, the Arabians, did before them (*Isa. xiii. 20*), live in tents called *hhymas*, from the shelter which they afford the inhabitants ; and *beet el shuar*, i.e., houses of hair, from the materials or webs of goats'-hair, whereof they are made. They are the very same which the ancients called *mupalia* ; and being then, as they are to this day, secured from the weather by a covering only of such hair-cloth as our coal sacks are made of, might very justly be described by Virgil to have, *rara tecta*, thin roofs. The colour of them is beautifully alluded to (*Cant. i. 5*), ‘I am black, but comely, like the tents of Kedar.’ For nothing certainly can afford a more delightful prospect than a large extensive plain, whether in its verdure, or even scorched up by the sunbeams, than those movable habitations pitched in circles upon them. When we find any number of these tents together (and I have seen from two to three hundred), then they are usually placed in a circle, and constitute a *douwar*. The fashion of each tent is of an oblong figure, not unlike the bottom of a ship turned upside down, as Sallust has long ago described them. However, they differ in bigness, according to the number of people who live in them ; and are accordingly supported, some with one pillar, others with two or three, whilst a curtain or carpet let down upon occasion from each of these divisions, turns the whole into so many separate apartments. These tents are kept firm and steady, by bracing, or stretching down their eaves with cords,

ties to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet ; one of these pins answering to the ‘nail,’ as the mallet does to the ‘hammer,’ which Jael used in ‘fastening to the ground the temples of Sisera’ (Judg. iv. 21). The pillars which I have mentioned are straight poles, eight or ten feet high, and three or four inches in thickness ; serving not only to support the tent itself, but, being full of hooks fixed there for the purpose, the Arabs hang upon them their clothes, baskets, saddles, and accoutrements of war. Holofernes (as we read in Judith xiii. 16) made the like use of the pillar of his tent, by hanging his falchion upon it ; where it is called ‘the pillar of the bed,’ from the custom, perhaps, that has always prevailed in these countries, of having the upper end of the carpet, mattress, or whatever else they lie upon, turned from the skirts of the tent towards the centre of it. But ‘the [κωρωπειον] canopy,’ as we render it (ver. 9), should, I presume, be rather called the ‘gnat,’ or ‘muskeeta net,’ which is a close curtain of gauze or fine linen, used all over the East, by people of better fashion, to keep out the flies. But the Arabs have nothing of this kind, who, in taking their rest, lie stretched out upon the ground, without bed, mattress, or pillow, wrapping themselves up only in their *hyk̄es*, and lying, as they find room, upon a mat or carpet, in the middle or in the corner of the tent. Those indeed who are married, have each of them a portion of the tent to themselves, cantoned off with a curtain ; the rest accommodate themselves as conveniently as they can, in the manner I have described. The description which Mela and Virgil have left us of the manner of living, and of the decampments among the Libyan shepherds, even to the circumstance of carrying along with them their faithful domestic animals, are as justly drawn up as if they had made their observations at this time.”

614.—BRIGANDINES.—*Jeremiah xlvi. 4, li. 3.*

This term translates the Hebrew word *siryon*, a coat of mail. Brigandine is defined by Wedgwood and Richardson as a kind of scale armour, made of many-jointed plates, very pliant and easy for the body, so called from being used by the light-armed foot soldiers known as *brigands*. It comes to us from the French, in which language it was in use as an “habergeon, or coat of mail.” It was not an unfamiliar English word in the sixteenth century, as is witnessed by the following passages :—“Besides two thousand archers and *brigans*, so

called in those days of an armour which they wore named *brigandines*, used then by footmen" (*Holinshed* ii., N. n, 5, b); "They have theyr *brigandyne*, theyr soldier's girdle, and to be short al that complete harnes which that valiaunt warriour Sainete Poule describeth unto them in sondry places" (*Udal, St. Mark, Pref.*); "They have also armed horses with their shoulders and breasts defenced, they have helmets and *brigandines*" (*Hakluyt, Voyages*, i. 62). It is also adopted by Milton :

"Then put on all thy glorious arms, thy helmet,
And *brigandine* of brass, thy broad habergeon."

The history of the word is singular. The derivation of the Italian *brigante* is obscure. Mr. Isaac Taylor thinks that not an impossible origin of the word may be found in the tribe of the Brigantes "who served as mediaeval mercenaries," or perhaps from Briga, a town near Nice. A far more likely derivation is to be found in the Italian *briga*, and the old French *brige*, strife, quarrel, contention ; which is found also in Chaucer, "Ye knowen wel that mine adversaries have begon this debatt and *brige* by his outrage" (*Tale of Melibæus*). But whatever its origin, that which at first meant no more than a "light-armed soldier," by that process of deterioration of which all language furnishes so many examples, when disbanded troops began to roam the country robbing the peaceable inhabitants—that curse of the Middle Ages—took the meaning of a "robber," a "brigand" in the modern sense. Then we find the word transferred from the land to the sea ; *brigante* became a *pirate*, while a pirate's ship became a *brigantine*, of which the modern *brig* is merely an abbreviation.—*Venables, in "Bib. Educ."*

615.—SENDING PORTIONS FROM THE TABLE. *Gen. xlivi. 34.*

It is still regarded as a distinction of value to have any portion from the table of a monarch, or of a great man. When a celebrated traveller dined in the presence of an Eastern sovereign, he was thought to be greatly honoured, because the king tore off a handful of meat from the joint and sent it to him. A Dutch ambassador in similar circumstances, mentions it as a mark of great honour that some bones of mutton, with half the meat gnawed off them, were sent him from the table of the emperor. Sir J. Chardin observes, that "the great men of the state are always by themselves,

and are served with great profusion, their part of each kind of provision being always double, treble, or a larger proportion of each kind of meat, in the feasts that are made for them. It is also a mark of distinction for a guest to have many different dishes set before him. Joseph, therefore, probably sent his favourite brother many different kinds of meat, there being enough of each dish to serve him for a meal, had he chosen to partake solely of it." Captains Irby and Mangles, giving an account of their entertainment in an Arab camp, mention that upon some partridges being brought in and roasted, part was given to them—one of the sheikhs, as a mark of distinction, "throwing a leg and a wing to each of us."

616.—HAMMERS WITHOUT HANDLES.—*Isaiah xli. 7.*

Many ancient works of art were overlaid with metal, *beaten* or *hammered* to fit the precise shapes. There is a representation of this overlaying in a tomb at Beni-Hassan. It exhibits a workman engaged in the fabrication of a brazen vessel, something like a crock. The process is the same as that in use at the present day—the man places the material on an anvil, and shapes it with a hammer. It is surprising, however, to find that the hammer has no handle—the workman holding *in his hand* the piece of metal with which he operates. Mr. Osburn well remarks on this:—"The jar occasioned to the nerves of the hand by this violent contact of metal with metal, without the interposition of a wooden handle, or other deadening substances, would be intolerable to a modern workman, or, if he had resolution to persevere, would probably bring on tetanus. Long practice from an early age had habituated the robust frames of the ancient mechanics to these rude concussions." Of course, account must also be taken of the loss of power in the strokes by the absence of the lever which the handle furnishes. In all the copies of Egyptian figures engaged in various arts, there does not appear to be one representation of a handled hammer.

617.—"HOW LONG HALT YE?—*1 Kings xviii. 21.*

This expression must be regarded as an explanation rather than a literal rendering of Elijah's words. Exactly he said, using a striking figure; "How long leap ye upon two branches?" alluding to the restlessness of a bird, which remains not long in one position, but is continually hopping from branch to branch. There is another translation given

which is only a little less effective, “How long limp ye upon two hams ?” alluding to a lame man’s effort at walking; he makes alternate movements of the body, now swaying to this side, and now to that.

618.—SARDIS FAMOUS FOR CHILDREN’S TOYS.
Zech. viii. 5.

“The games of children are pretty nearly the same the world over. Wilkinson has described some of the toys of the ancient Egyptians, found among the ruins and tombs of that remarkable land. Similar remains are found in various parts of Western Asia, the more graceful being the work of the Greek race, and of their nearest neighbours in the western part of the Peninsula. Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was celebrated of old for its manufacture of children’s toys, as Nuremburg is in Germany now. In that same region a great variety of articles in terra cotta are found, exhibiting no little taste in the imitation of nature’s models. Miniature horses, cattle, dogs, fish, chickens, lions, and deer, an ass with its pack-saddle, dolls with arms and legs that could be moved by the pulling of a string, comic figures, or caricatures of hunch-backs, deformed negroes, satyrs, and idiots; also whistles, marbles, and many other things in a sufficiently good state of preservation, which compare well with similar products of our modern civilisation. The religion of Islâm, indeed, forbids such representations now, yet it cannot prevent little girls playing with dolls, nor boys amusing themselves with mimic horses, sheep, and carts; nor both from eating the sugar birds, horses, and men of the candy-seller, himself a Muslim.”—*Van Lennep.*

619.—THE WORSHIP OF AMMON.—*Nahum iii. 8 (marg.).*

This deity appears to have been first worshipped among the Ethiopians or Libyans, and afterwards by the Egyptians, who called him *Amun*. The Hebrews termed this deity *Amon*; the Greeks *Zeus Ammon*; the Romans *Jupiter Ammon*. He was regarded as the supreme divinity. Herodotus tells us that there was an oracle sacred to Ammon at Meroe, and also at Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, which, according to Diodorus Siculus, was called *Diospolis*, or city of Jupiter; and the prophet Nahum calls it Ammon or No-Ammon. This deity had a celebrated temple in Africa, where he was worshipped under the figure of a ram, or of a man with a ram’s head. The temple was erected in a beautiful spot, in the midst of the Libyan desert.

At this place there was an oracle which Alexander the Great consulted at the hazard of his life. The ram was sacred to Ammon, and sometimes he is represented as a human being, with simply the horns of a ram. Hence he is frequently mentioned, in the ancient writers, particularly the poets, with the addition of the epithet *Corniger*, or horn-bearing. When the sun entered Aries, or the Ram, which was the first sign of the zodiac, that is, at the vernal equinox, the Egyptians celebrated a feast in honour of Ammon, which was conducted in the most extravagant manner, and from this festival are said to have been derived the Grecian orgies. The Jewish Rabbis allege, and some Christian writers coincide in the opinion, that one reason for the institution of the Passover was to prevent the Jews from falling into the idolatrous practices of the Egyptians; and, accordingly, it was appointed to be celebrated, or at least the lamb was to be taken, on the tenth day of the month Abib, being the very time when the Egyptian festival in honour of Ammon was held. Rabbi Abraham Sela, noticing the coincidence in point of time, says, “God commanded that they should celebrate the religious feast of the Passover at the full moon, that being the time when the Egyptians were in the height of their jollity, and sacrificed to the planet which is called the Ram, and in opposition to this God enjoined them to kill a young ram for an offering.” Hence Tacitus, the Roman historian, speaks of the Passover as “the ram slain, as it were, in profanation of Ammon.”

The people called Ammonites worshipped the god *Moloch*, and not the god whose name seems so much like their own.

620.—THE SCENERY OF THE DESERT.—*Exod.* v. 3.

Dr. Norman Macleod gives the following description of the impressions produced by a journey across the desert:—“The railway changed the scenery of the desert no more than a balloon changes the scenery of the clouds. Once out of Cairo, we were in the ocean of sand and desolation, as much as a ship out of Plymouth is in the ocean of green water. We passed across the characteristic flinty ground of the real desert; we saw rolling hills of tawny, almost golden, sand, like yellow snowhills, drifted and smoothed by the winds, and as if never trodden by the foot of man. We saw troops of light gazelles bounding along with elastic step as they fled in terror from the mysterious monster that rushed snorting towards them from the horizon. We saw in great beauty more than one mirage, fully realising all we had ever heard of its deceptive

likeness to large pools or lakes of water, with shores indented by tiny bays and jutting promontories, and with a hazy brightness over them singularly picturesque. We saw strings of loaded camels, with Arabs on foot guiding them, and slowly journeying, as their predecessors had done for thousands of years along that old route, it may be to Palestine or to Arabia Petræa, or to strange and unknown scenes, or to verdant seas of pasture lands and feeding grounds for goats and camels, with tents pitched round springs of water—spots to which no vacation tourist has yet penetrated, and that remain as they were in the days of Job. And thus the desert was very desert, out and out, as it ought to have been, in order to meet the expectations of those more sanguine even than ourselves. On we went, thoroughly enjoying the scene, with no feeling of disappointment whatever. We could certainly picture a more ideal mode of passing through that old romantic waste, but it was impossible to picture a more perfect waste than that which we passed through."

621.—THE THREE GREAT FORMS OF BAAL.—*Judges* ii. 11.

Prof. Wilkins says that the great Nature-power, the Sun-god, was viewed in three ways:—1. As Baal Samim, or Adonis, the fresh young sun of spring, full of creative force, calling all vegetable life into luxuriant fertility, and kindling in the animal world the fire of youthful passion. 2. As the fierce sun of summer, like Tantalus, burning up the fruits and flowers that owe their life to him—Baal-Mars, or Moloch, the terrible god of fire. 3. As the principle of order, unity, and steadfastness in the universe—the power which held the world together when the beautiful Adonis had been slain by the fury of Moloch, which, albeit in gloom and darkness, husbanded and gathered the exhausted powers of nature for new creative exertions, when the world should be gladdened again by the birth of the life-giving sun of spring; this was Baal-Chewan, identified with Saturn.

622.—A MODERN MARRIAGE IN PALESTINE.—*John* ii. 1, 2.

"We were invited in the evening to a Jewish marriage. We went at the hour, but a long delay occurred, for the bridegroom not having brought a string of diamonds for his bride's head-dress—an ornament much valued here—she and her friends refused to let the ceremony proceed till it was purchased. 'Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?' is a natural question in Israel at this day. As we

were walking to and fro before the door, Mr. Calman spoke with a tall Jew upon the evils of the Talmud. He seemed to be much convinced, and said, ‘Well, I see that we are a people without a religion. But what shall we do? shall we become Christians like the Greeks, who have not the Word of God?’ Returning to the house some hours after, we found that the marriage ceremony had been concluded, and that the company were now seated at the marriage feast. From Mr. Calman we received an account of the previous part of the ceremony. Early on the marriage day, the *bathan* or poet, who performs a very prominent part, comes to the bride’s house, and addresses her most solemnly upon her sins, urging her to cry for forgiveness;—for marriage is looked upon as an ordinance by which sins are forgiven, just as the day of atonement, pilgrimages, and the like; and the Jews believe that it will be destined that day whether her luck is to be good or not. She and her attendant maidens are often bathed in tears during this address, which sometimes lasts two hours. The *bathan* next goes to the bridegroom, and exhorts him in the same manner. This done, the bridegroom puts on the same white dress which he wears on the day of atonement, and spends some time in prayer and confession of sins, using the same prayers as on that solemn day. He is then led to the synagogue, accompanied by a band of music. The band next goes from him to accompany the bride. The parties are placed near each other, and the marriage canopy, on four poles, is held over them. The contract is read, and the sum named which the husband promises to give the woman in case of divorce. The fathers and mothers, friends of the bridegroom, and the bridesmaids, take the bride by the hand, and all go round the bridegroom, in obedience to the words, ‘A woman shall compass a man.’ A cup of wine is produced, and seven blessings pronounced over it. The bridegroom puts the marriage ring upon the bride’s finger, saying, ‘Behold, thou art consecrated to me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel.’ Other seven blessings are pronounced over the wine; after which they taste it, and the glass is thrown down and broken, to signify that even in their joy they are no better than a broken shred. They are then led together to the bride’s house, where we found them sitting at the head of the table in silence. The bride had her face veiled down nearly to the mouth with a handkerchief, which she wears during the whole ceremony. Her dress, and that of most of her companions, was pure white. The table

was filled with guests, the men being seated on one side, and the women on the other. Before eating, all wash their hands out of a dish with two handles, so formed that the one hand may not defile the other. It was singular to see this feast of bearded men, the faces of many of whom might have been studies for a painter. The feast at the marriage of Cana of Galilee was vividly presented to our minds. During the repast the music struck up; several Jews played well on the violin, violoncello, cymbals, tambourine, and a harp of a singular shape, which they said was Jewish, not Christian. It was played by beating upon the strings with two wooden instruments, and the effect was pleasing. It is remarkable that, beyond the bounds of their own land, Israel should have so many instruments of music, while in Palestine, as the prophet foretold, '*The joy of the harp ceaseth.*' The *bathan*, or chanter, frequently interrupted the music, and excited the mirth and good humour of the company by his impromptu German verses on the new married pair and their friends. We were not invited to sit at table,—for had we Gentiles touched their food it would have been unclean,—but dishes were handed to us where we sat. Several times a plate went round the company for collections; the first time it was 'for the cook,' and this they called '*the golden soup*', the next time was 'for Jerusalem'; and a third time 'for the new married couple'—a present for the entertainment given to the company. The bridegroom should have preached a sermon to the company, but he being unlearned, the chanter did it for him. After supper there was a dance, but not after the manner of the Gentiles. Some little girls first danced together; the uncle, a tall, handsome, bearded Jew, then danced alone; last of all he danced with the bride, leading her round and round by a handkerchief. This forms the concluding part of the ceremony enjoined by the Talmud. Wine flowed plentifully as at Cana; but, being the simple wine of the country, not the slightest riot or extravagance was visible."—*Narrative of a Mission to the Jews.*

623.—HABITS OF THE PARTRIDGE.—*Jeremiah xvii. 11.*

This passage is more precisely rendered in the margin, "Gathereth young which she hath not brought forth." Or thus, "As the partridge sitteth on eggs which she hath not laid." According to Epiphanius, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, and the Arabian naturalist Damir, there was an old belief that the partridge took eggs out of other birds' nests,

and that when the young were hatched, and were old enough, they ran away from their false parent ; so a man who becomes rich by unrighteous means loses his riches as the fictitious partridge her stolen brood. Such a notion may have been held by the ancient Hebrews, though it is quite unfounded, and it may be here referred to by the prophet Jeremiah. If we adopt the rendering of the text as given in our version, we must understand it as referring to the loss of the bird's eggs by man's or other destructive agency.

Canon Tristram speaks of the partridge as very plentiful near the Cave of Adullam, where it lays its beautiful cream-coloured eggs in holes and caves, and under the shelter of rock crevices, and runs with wonderful agility up and down the cliffs. It is accustomed also to conceal itself in the dense herbage and growing corn of marshy plains, where its singular call can be heard, as on Gennesaret, resounding at daybreak from every part of the plain, while not a bird can be seen.

It is also said that the ringing call-note of this bird may be often heard in early mornings "echoing from cliff to cliff, alike amidst the barrenness of the wilderness of Judæa, and in the glens of the forest of Carmel. The male birds will stand erect on some boulder, sending their cheery challenge to some rival across the wady, till the moment they perceive themselves detected they drop down from their throne, and scud up the hill, faster than any dog, screening themselves from sight by any projecting rock as they run."

624.—QUARRIES BENEATH JERUSALEM.—*I Kings v. 17.*

Dr. Norman Macleod visited these quarries, and gives the following account :—" Among the first places I went to was the subterranean quarry, the entrance to which is near the Damascus Gate. The nature of this place will be best understood by supposing an immense excavation, out of which it is highly probable the stones were quarried to build the city, so that Jerusalem may be said to be reared over one vast cavern, the roof of which is supported by huge pillars of rock, left untouched by the workmen. We entered by a narrow hole, through which we had to creep ; and, after stumbling over débris down hill and up hill, we found ourselves in the midst of a labyrinth of vast caves, whose high arches and wide mouths were lost in darkness. On we went tottering after our feeble lights long after we lost sight of the eye of day at the entrance. With cavern after cavern on the right and left and ahead of us, we got eerie, and began to think, in spite of

the lucifers—unknown as an earthly reality to the Jews of old—what would become of us if our lights went out. It is difficult to say how far the quarries extend. I have been told by one who has examined into their inner mysteries, that there are walls built up which prevent thorough exploration. But I have no doubt they will, as many incidents in history indicates, be found to extend to at least the Temple Area. It is more than likely that the stones of the Temple were here prepared : for ‘the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building.’ The stone is a white limestone, and must have given a pure and bright appearance to the Temple.

625.—THE “AGNUS DEI” OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.
John i. 36.

In very early times of the Christian Church the sign of the Cross appears to have been used in baptism, and gradually a peculiar significance began to be attached to the mere outward stamping with this sign, or anything which recalled the death of Christ. As the heathen were accustomed to wear amulets or charms round their necks, the practice was introduced among Christians of wearing a piece of wax stamped with the figure of a lamb, Christ being the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” This amulet was called the “Agnus Dei,” or Lamb of God. It was made of a cake of virgin wax, mixed with balsam and holy oil, on which there is stamped the figure of a lamb supporting the Banner of the Cross. This is specially blessed by the Pope, and is supposed to possess great virtues. It is carried, covered with a piece of stuff in the form of a heart, in the solemn processions, and frequently worn about the neck like a charm. The practice of blessing the “Agnus Dei” arose about the seventh or eighth century.

Pope Urban V. sent to John Palæologus, Emperor of the Greeks, an “Agnus Dei” folded in fine paper, on which was recorded a detailed description, in verse, of its peculiar virtues. These verses state that the “Agnus Dei” is formed of wax and balm mixed with chrism, and that, being consecrated by mystical words, it possesses the power of removing thunder and dispersing storms, of giving to pregnant women an easy delivery, of preventing shipwreck, taking away sin, repelling the devil, increasing riches, securing against fire, and many other wonderful qualities.

These superstitious medals are still used, but their importation into England was forbidden by an express Act of Parliament in the 13th Queen Elizabeth.

626.—THE FORMATION OF RED CORAL.—*Job xxviii. 18.*

Recent researches have brought us very precise knowledge of the structure and habits of the polypes. We know that among the sea-anemones and coral-forming animals each polype has a mouth leading to a stomach, which is open at its inner end, and thus communicates freely with the general cavity of the body; that the tentacles placed round the mouth are hollow, and that they perform the part of arms in seizing and capturing prey. It is known that many of these creatures are capable of being multiplied by artificial division, the divided halves growing after a time into complete and separate animals; and that many are able to perform a very similar process naturally, in such a manner that one polype may, by repeated incomplete divisions, give rise to a sort of sheet, or turf, formed by innumerable connected and yet independent descendants. Or, what is still more common, a polype may throw out buds which are converted into polypes, or branches bearing polypes, until a tree-like mass, sometimes of very considerable size, is formed.

This is what happens in the case of the red coral of commerce. A minute polype, fixed to the rocky bottom of the deep sea, grows up into a branched trunk. The end of every branch and twig is terminated by a polype, and all the polypes are connected together by a fleshy substance, traversed by innumerable canals which place each polype in communication with every other, and carry nourishment to the substance of the supporting stem. It is a sort of natural co-operative store, every polype helping the whole at the same time as it helps itself. The interior of the stem, like that of the branches, is solidified by the deposition of carbonate of lime in its tissue, somewhat in the same fashion as our own bones are formed of animal matter impregnated with lime salts; and it is this dense skeleton (usually turned deep red by a peculiar colouring matter) cleared of the soft animal investment, as the heart-wood of a tree might be stripped of its bark, which is the red coral.

In the case of the red coral, the hard skeleton belongs to the interior of the stem and branches only, but in the common white corals each polype has a complete skeleton of its own. These polypes are sometimes solitary, in which case the whole

skeleton is represented by a single cup, with partitions radiating from its centre to its circumference. When the polypes formed by budding or division remain associated, the poly-pidom is sometimes made up of nothing but an aggregation of these cups, while at other times the cups are at once separated and held together by an intermediate substance which represents the branches of the red coral. The red coral polype, again, is a comparatively rare animal, inhabiting a limited area, the skeleton of which has but a very insignificant mass, while the white corals are very common, occur in almost all seas, and form skeletons which are sometimes extremely massive.—*Art. "Good Words."*

627.—THE CONQUEROR OF SAMARIA.—*2 Kings xviii. 9, 10.*

The narrative in the Book of Kings leaves us with the impression that it was Shalmaneser who captured the city of Samaria. This is not indeed directly asserted, and it seems probable that the actual conqueror was Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser, who had been Tartan, or Commander-in-Chief, of the Assyrian army. Certainly this Sargon claims the exploit for himself in one of the Khorsabad inscriptions. The blockade of Samaria may have been commenced by Shalmaneser, but on his death, which occurred either after he had returned to Assyria, or else in the land of Israel, or perhaps even in consequence of a rebellion at home, occasioned by the long absence of the monarch from the capital, Sargon succeeded in establishing himself on the throne. It is certainly to him that we must ascribe the important campaigns that followed. The inscription at Khorasabad recounts, probably with truth, numerous other conquests which followed that of Samaria, all marked by the same extensive deportations of the conquered nations.

628.—“COME, FOR THE SUPPER IS READY.—*Luke xiv. 17.*

Dr. Thomson has been able to verify the exactness of this representation, as well as some other of the minute details of the parable. He says : “I noticed that the friend at whose house we dined last evening sent a servant to call us when dinner was ready. Is this custom generally observed ? Not very strictly among the common people, nor in cities, where Western manners have greatly modified the Oriental ; but in Lebanon it still prevails. If a sheikh beg, or emeer invites, he always sends a servant to call you at the proper time. This servant often repeats the very formula mentioned in

Luke xiv. 17 : ‘Tefūddūlū, el ’asha hâder’—‘Come, for the supper is ready.’ The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the wealthy and to the nobility is in strict agreement with the parable, where the certain man who made the great supper, and bade many, is supposed to be of this class. It is true now, as then, that to refuse is a high insult to the maker of the feast ; nor would such excuses as those in the parable be more acceptable to a Druse emeer than they were to the lord of this ‘great supper ;’ but, however angry, very few would manifest their displeasure by sending the servants into the highways and hedges after the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. All these characters are found in abundance in our streets ; and I have known rich men who filled out the costume of the parable even in these particulars ; it was, however, as matter of ostentation, to show the extent of their benevolence and the depth of their humility and condescension. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to find enough of the drapery of this parable still practised to show that originally it was, in all its details, in close conformity to the customs of this country.”

629.—SIDON AND OTHER PHœNICIAN CITIES.—*Gen.* xlix. 13.

Prof. Wilkins, in a valuable and learned essay, says : “It is certain that the children of Israel, on their arrival in the Land of Promise, found the coast of Phœnicia studded with thriving commercial cities. “The strong city Tyre” is mentioned first in Joshua xix. 29, but Sidon is known to Jacob at the time of the blessing of his children. And even Sidon, according to the native tradition, was compelled to yield in antiquity to Byblus and Berytus, the towns of a race distinct from the Sidonian Canaanites, and at this time independent of them. Berytus, the modern Beirût, may indeed contest with Damascus the honour of being the oldest city in the world that still continues to prosper. But, as far as the Jewish tradition carries us back, Sidon takes its place at the head of the Phœnician cities : and this is the true interpretation of the figure of speech that makes Sidon the “eldest born of Canaan.” Tyre, though it was founded before the invasion of the Israelites, was still in a state of dependence on the mother state ; and the name of Sidon, as we see from the limits assigned to the tribe of Zebulun, was applied to the whole sea coast as far to the south as Carmel.

We may, therefore, figure to ourselves the strip of coast-land covered by the name “Phœnicia” tenanted at the time

of the Israelite invasion by a people unquestionably allied very closely to the Canaanites of the interior, but distinguished from them by striking differences of manners and a still more advanced and peaceful civilisation. Confined to a narrow strip of land by the spurs of Lebanon, which served at the same time to protect them to a great extent from incursions from the East, the Sidonian people devoted themselves at first to the fisheries from which they drew their name. But the numerous harbours with which the coast was furnished tempted them to venture by degrees on longer voyages than had ever been tried before. Egypt, then under the rule of the Kindred Hyksos kings, was naturally the first country with which they established commercial relations, and at a very early age these had grown into great importance, and the intercourse of the Phoenicians with the country that was then in the forefront of the civilisation of the world must have had a very powerful influence in developing the arts and sciences amongst them."

630.—VARIOUS USES OF EASTERN ROOFS.—*Josh. ii. 6.*

The roofs of the houses in Persia are flat, and terraced over with earth. Stout timbers are first laid across the walls, about two feet apart. These are covered over with small split sticks of wood, at intervals of perhaps three inches, on which are spread rush mats, like those I have mentioned as used on the floors. Then succeeds a thick layer of a rank thorny wood, which grows abundantly on the mountains, in a bushy, globular form, a foot or two in diameter. This weed is so resinous as not soon to decay,—is an excellent article of light fuel, and is much used for burning brick, heating ovens, etc. It may be that “grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,” as mentioned by our Saviour. Upon the thick layer of this wood is spread a coat of clay mortar, and trodden down, and next a stratum of dry earth, six or eight inches deep, over which is plastered a layer of the mixed straw and mud. An occasional depression of the back edge of the roof, furnished with a spout a few feet long, conducts off the water. The soil is so tenacious in all parts of Persia that there is little danger that a roof thus constructed will be pervious to the rain, if kept in a state of good repair. It should be annually plastered over with the straw and mud, which will be worn and washed off by the exposure of a season, and snow must be thrown off with a shovel as soon as it falls. These flat roofs are pleasant promenades for summer evening walks, and the natives usually sleep upon them during the

warm season, for the sake of the cool air and freedom from vermin. There is no exposure in thus sleeping out, as there is no dew in Persia. The roofs should be secured with balustrades, that one family may not gaze upon the other's premises. Persian law sanctions the stoning, without trial or mercy, of all who are guilty of such an offence ; and the reader will recollect the sad misfortune and sin into which King David fell, in consequence of indulging an idle curiosity while walking upon the terrace.—*Perkins.*

631.—BAPTISM AMONG EASTERN CHRISTIANS.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

Baptism is administered among Eastern Christians as early after birth as practicable ; a church festival is often selected, particularly the anniversary of our Lord's baptism or of His Crucifixion. There is usually a room in the church, called the baptistry, where the rite is performed. Among the Nestorians, who have kept themselves the most free from innovations, baptism is administered as follows : The child is divested of its clothing, and anointed on the head and the breast, in the form of a cross, with consecrated oil, poured from a horn in which it is kept for the purpose. This is said to be done in imitation of the anointing of kings and prophets in the Old Testament ; and the practice is supposed to be countenanced by the words of the Apostle : "He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Like the Church of Rome, most Eastern Christians believe that the anointing with oil secures the influences of the Holy Spirit, while the baptismal water removes the taint of original sin—a fact which explains why no one, not even its mother, ever kisses the infant before its baptism, after which it is said to have become a Christian. After the application of the oil, the Nestorians plunge the child up to its neck in a vessel of tepid water, salted with salt, and it is thus held by a deacon, while the priest takes water with both hands and pours it thrice upon the head, naming each time one of the persons of the Trinity. The other sects add to this a form of exorcism of the devil, accompanied with blowing from the mouth, as if to blow him away. When a babe appears to be dying, the rite is administered by simply dipping the hand in water and passing it over its body.—*Lennep.*

632.—WOMEN GRINDING AT A MILL.—*Matt. xxiv. 41.*

Illustrations of this custom we take from the description of two Eastern travellers. "Passing in among the flocks and

their owners, and along the streets (if they can be called such) I counted forty-seven huts, hovels, or houses, and should think that about a man to a house, a woman, and two children of any age you may choose to imagine, will give to modern Jericho, the town of Eriha, its quota of population—namely, not quite two hundred inhabitants. There is some show of work. One or two are preparing corn after the old method of turning one round stone upon another, before which they sit or squat, pouring in corn with one hand, and holding on to a peg in the stone with the other. The surface of the lower stone is convex, and that of the upper concave: hence they retain their relative positions while in use. One mill seems to be the property of several families, and generally requires but one hand. Probably they were larger in former times, and required two at a mill. These single mills are about twenty-seven inches in diameter, and produce a low, ‘husky’ noise, reminding us of the description in Holy Writ, and of the antiquity of the machine; for in Egypt it was said that ‘the maid servant’ sat ‘behind the mill.’ I have never seen men engaged at it. ‘Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left’—that is, notwithstanding their nearness to each other and the sameness of act. While thus engaged, one shall suddenly disappear leaving the other untouched.

“It is difficult, on looking at two persons so engaged, to conceive a situation in which it would be less easy to remove the one without interfering with the other. A whole quarto of commentaries on the above verse (Matt. xxiv. 41) could not have impressed my mind with a tenth part of the conviction which flashed upon me when I first saw two women actually ‘grinding at the mill;’ all unconscious of the cause of my admiration, and as yet ignorant, alas! of the sublime lessons to enforce and explain which their humble task was referred to.”

633.—WATERS DIVIDED FROM WATERS.—*Gen. i. 6, 7.*

Ruskin illustrates this passage as follows:—“An unscientific reader knows little about the manner in which the volume of the atmosphere surrounds the earth; but I imagine that he could hardly glance at the sky when rain was falling in the distance, and see the level line of the bases of the clouds from which the shower descended, without being able to attach an instant and easy meaning to the words ‘expansion in the midst of the waters.’ And if, having once seized this idea, he

proceeded to examine it more accurately, he would perceive at once, if he had ever noticed anything of the nature of the clouds, that the level line of their bases did indeed most severely and stringently divide ‘waters from waters,’—that is to say, divide water in its collective and tangible state from water in its divided and aerial state; or the waters which *fall* and *flow* from those which *rise* and *float*. I understand the making the firmament to signify that (so far as man is concerned) most magnificent ordinance of the clouds; the ordinance, that as the great plain of waters was formed on the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean; and that this upper and heavenly should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them, or rocks divide, but answering each other with their own voices from pole to pole; no longer restrained by established shores, and guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at His pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their encampments upon the heights of the hills; no longer hurried downwards for ever, moving but to fall, nor lost in the lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the East and the West with the waving of their wings, and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of divers colours, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame.”

634.—THE GOLDEN RULE A WELL-KNOWN PROVERB.
Matt. vii. 12.

The following curious incident indicates that our Lord employed, in His teaching of our duty one to another, a common proverbial saying of His time. Considering the sources of our information concerning the Jewish teachers it is unlikely that we have in the following passage any intentional imitation of Christ’s words: it seems more natural and reasonable to refer both our Lord’s sentence and Hillel’s to some common source.

Hillel and Shammai were the two most noted Jewish doctors in the days of Christ, *i.e.*, at the time of His birth. Hillel was perhaps one of the most patient and temperate men that ever lived. One day a heathen went to Shammai, and asked him mockingly to convert him to the Law while he stood on one leg. The irate master turned him from his door. The mocker then went to Hillel with the same demand. Hillel received

him kindly, and gave him this reply : “ Do not unto another what thou wouldest not have another do unto thee. This is the whole Law, the rest is mere commentary.”

635.—THE SAD LOT OF THE LEPERS.—*2 Kings vii. 3.*

Dr. Norman Macleod gives the following graphic picture of these sufferers by the most terrible of all human diseases :—

“ I saw one sight on Mount Zion which vividly recalled the past, and that was a band of lepers. They inhabit a few huts near one of the gates, and are shut off by a wall with only one entrance to their wretched small court and mud dwellings. Ten of those miserable beings came out to beg from us—as they do from every one who is likely to give them alms. They sat afar off with outstretched arms, directing attention to their sores. There was nothing absolutely revolting in their appearance ; but it was unutterably sad to see so many human beings, with all the capacities for enjoying life, thus separated from their kind, creeping out of their mud dens day by day through a long course of years to obtain aid to sustain their miserable existence ; and then creeping back again—to talk, to dream, to hope. And for what ? No friendly grasp from relation or friend, no kiss from parent or child, from husband or wife. Dying daily, they daily increase in misery and pain. What more vivid symbol of sin could have been selected than this disease, which destroys the whole man from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, slowly but surely eating his life away, and which is incurable save by the power of God ? May He have mercy on all such ! The sight of those sufferers in such a place suggested many a scene in Bible history, above all, the compassion of Him who ‘ bore our sicknesses,’ and restored such pitiable objects to the health and joy of a new existence. Nor could one fail to associate the helpless condition of lepers with that of the people who still occupy Zion, whose houses are built over the dust of what was once their own stately palaces, and whose unbelief is now, as it was in the days of the Prophets, like unto a deadly leprosy with wounds that have not yet ‘ been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with ointment.’ Their sin has been so visibly punished, that we may truly add : ‘ Your country is desolate ; your cities are burned with fire ; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Sion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.’ ”

636.—SACRIFICING THE FIRSTBORN.—*Mic.* vi. 7.

The inhabitants of Florida were guilty of this horrid practice. The cruel ceremony was performed in the presence of one of their princes or Caciques, called Paracoustis. The victim was always a male child. The mother covered her face, weeping and groaning over the stone against which the child is to be dashed in pieces. The women who accompanied her sung and danced in a circle, while another woman stood up in the middle of the ring, holding the child in her arms, and showed it at a distance to the Paracousti, who probably was esteemed a representative of the sun, or deity to which the victim was offered; after which the sacrifice was made. The Peruvians of quality, says More, and those too of meaner sort, would sacrifice their firstborn to redeem their own life, when the priest pronounced that they were mortally sick.

637.—THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE'S EYE.—*Matt.* xix. 24.

Some have supposed that the Evangelist wrote not (*κάμηλος*) a camel, but (*κάμιλος*) a cable. But this alteration cannot be supported by the manuscripts, and it is even said that the word *κάμιλος* has been invented for the sake of explaining the passage, which is probably only a strongly expressed familiar proverb of a thing that is nearly impossible. The Talmud gives the parallel phrase of an *elephant* passing through a needle's eye; and the Koran reproduces the very words of the Gospel. Lord Nugent first called attention to the possible reference to a narrow gate which is often formed for foot passengers beside the larger gate of Eastern cities: but even this explanation can hardly be maintained. City gates are shut at sunset, or soon after. Some of them contain, in one of their folds, a small door, which is left open for an hour or more after sunset, to accommodate foot passengers accidentally delayed outside the walls or in the town; and it can be opened even later with a backshish. This little door is said to be called by the Arabs of the present day "the eye of a needle." A missionary, long resident in the East, says, however, that he has never met with the expression, though it would seem natural enough. Nor has he ever heard that camels are sometimes made to pass through this little door upon their knees after their load and pack-saddle have been taken off, which has been asserted. The fact is, a camel could never pass through such a door, for, besides being small and low, its threshold, which consists of the lower part of the great gate, is a foot

and a half or two feet in height. The needle our Lord refers to is the Oriental needle, not the fine steel instrument manufactured by modern Europe, but the piece of burnished iron which varies from two to five inches in length, or the large tape-needle whose ancient specimens in ivory are yet found among the ruins of old cities.

638.—KISSING THE IDOLS.—*Hosea* xiii. 2.

From both Cicero and Tacitus we learn that it was a not uncommon practice to salute the hands and even the very mouths of the gods. It was usual also to kiss the feet and knees of the images, and to kiss the doors of the temples, the pillars, and posts of the gates. The Mohammedans who go on pilgrimage to Mecca kiss the black stone and the four corners of the Kaaba. In the sprinkling of holy water the Romish priest kisses the *aspergillum* with which the ceremony is performed ; and at the procession on Palm Sunday, the deacon kisses the palm which he presents to the priest. This mark of reverence was shown in ancient times either by kissing the idol itself, or by kissing one's own hand, and then throwing it out towards the idol. Another Biblical reference to the custom of kissing idols will be found in 1 Kings xix. 18.

639.—LEGENDS CONCERNING SHEM.—*Gen.* ix. 26.

Very little being said in Scripture respecting the patriarch Shem, his story has been made up by the Eastern imagination. The Jews assert that Shem handed down to posterity the theology which Noah had received from the former patriarchs, and by this means the true religion was maintained after the Flood. According to our tradition he had an academy or theological school on Mount Tabor. The Rabbis say that Shem and Melchizedek were the same person, and that he had been at the school of Methuselah for seventy-eight years. He taught Abraham the whole ceremonial of worship and sacrifice ; imparted to men the law of justice, the calculations of months and years with the necessary intercalations. He also possessed the spirit of prophecy, which he exercised for 400 years after the Flood, though, on account of general corruption, he laboured to little purpose. Another story says he dwelt in the island of the sun (the geographical position of which is not given), that he invented astronomy, and was the first king that ever lived. Shem has also been credited with the honour of founding several cities—Septa, a maritime city of Africa, Salerno in Italy, and Salem in Judæa. Noah is said to have

committed the body of Adam to Shem, who buried it on Mount Calvary ; he also deposited along with the body Noah's will, by which he divided the whole earth between his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Some say that the Gentiles worshipped the three sons of Noah—Ham as Jupiter, Japheth as Neptune, and Shem as Pluto.

640.—ACCUSED AS BEING SPIES.—*Gen. xlvi. 16.*

It will be remembered that Joseph, when his ten brothers first appeared before him in Egypt, pretended not to know them, and treated them in a manner which must to them have been very unaccountable. As an excuse for his severe and tyrannical conduct he pretended to regard them as spies ; and the more they protested their innocence the more strongly he declared his conviction that they had come “to spy out the nakedness of the land.” But, it may be asked, was there really any plausibility in this pretended suspicion of Joseph's ? might they have been spies ? and if so, in the employ of what nation ?

It was evident that they could not have come on behalf of any nation in Syria, for that country in those days was but scantily peopled ; and the whole of Western Asia this side of the Euphrates Valley was in possession of a few wandering hordes. All the tribes of this vast district united could have created no alarm in such a powerful and well-organised nation as Egypt ; and it would have been preposterous to suppose—or to pretend to suppose—that Jacob's sons had come as spies for any or all of them.

But in the Plain of Shinar, and around the Upper Euphrates and the Tigris, there was at this time a nation as ancient and as powerful as Egypt—the empire founded by Nimrod had now reached to gigantic proportions, and was, in fact, Egypt's rival for universal empire. Syria lay in the direct route between the two empires, and whichever rival had contemplated an attack upon the other would first have secured the intermediate lands and tribes. So it will be seen that there was plausibility in the affected suspicion of Joseph—those men *might* have been spies in the pay of Assyria.

641.—THE NET AND THE BIRDS.—*Prov. i. 17.*

This proverb, though apparently so simple, has received a variety of interpretations. It seems designed to set forth the fact that the net is clearly in sight, over against the fact that the birds nevertheless fly into it—and so to exhibit their con-

duct as wholly irrational. The verse may therefore be interpreted thus: "Like thoughtless birds that with open eyes fly into the net, so sinners while plotting destruction for others plunge themselves in ruin." The *Speaker's Commentary* suggests that the true meaning is as follows: "For in vain, to no purpose, is the net spread out openly. Clear as the warning is, it is in vain. The birds still fly in. So the great net of God's judgments is spread out, open to the eyes of all, and yet the doers of evil, wilfully blind, still rush into it." According to Bertheau and others, the "bird" is the innocent man against whom the wicked plot. Their plans are too patent, and as the bird avoids the net which is not concealed, so he escapes. As far as he is concerned, they have spread their net in vain. This explanation is so natural and simple that it gains increasing favour upon closer study. A third interpretation takes the words "in the eyes of" as meaning "in the judgment of." The bird thinks it will escape, yet is taken. The young man thinks that he at least shall not fall into the snares laid for him, and so goes blindly into them.

642.—BUTTER AND HONEY.—*Isaiah vii. 15.*

Ranwolff, speaking of his passage through the Arabian desert, says:—"We were necessitated to be contented with some slight food or other, and make a shift with curds, cheese, fruits, honey, etc., and to take any of these with bread, for a good entertainment. The honey in these parts is very good, and of a whitish colour, whereof they take in their caravans and navigations great leathern bottles full along with them. This they bring you in small cups, and *put a little butter to it*, and so you eat it with biscuits. By this dish I often remembered John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, how he also did eat honey in the desert, together with other food."

643.—A RECENT VISIT TO NAIN."—*Luke vii. 11.*

We crossed Hermon, and found ourselves in a small decayed village on the edge of another bay of Esdraelon, which runs between the hills of Galilee and Hermon to the north. Hadji Ali recommended us to halt here, as it was an excellent place for lunch, having shelter from the heat, good water, and, above all, a friendly sheik, who would sell him a good lamb. But the village had attractions to us which Hadji knew not of. It was Nain. It is poor, confused, and filthy, like every village in Palestine, but its situation is very fine, as com-

manding a good view of the plain, with the opposite hills, and especially of Tabor, that rises like a noble wooded island at the head of the green bay. And Nain, in the light of the Gospel history, is another of those fountains of living water opened up by the Divine Saviour, which have flowed through all lands to refresh the thirsty. How many widows, for eighteen centuries, have been comforted, how many broken hearts soothed and healed, by the story of Nain—by the unsought and unexpected sympathy of Jesus, and by His power and majesty. It was here that He commanded those who carried the bier of the widow's only son to stop, and said to the widow herself, "Weep not," and to her son "Arise!" and then "delivered him to his mother," the most precious gift she could receive, and such as a Divine Saviour could alone bestow.

What has Nineveh or Babylon been to the world in comparison with Nain? And this is the wonder constantly suggested by the insignificant villages of Palestine, that their names have become parts, as it were, of the deepest experiences of the noblest persons of every land and every age.—*Dr. N. Macleod.*

644.—ELISHA'S STAFF.—*2 Kings iv. 29.*

The missionary Turner gives the following note:—"This obscure reference to the staff of Elisha has, perhaps, a ray or two of light from the fact that, in Samoa, the son, or representative of a political head, when sent on any important message to another district, takes with him his father's *staff* and fly-flapper, to show that his message is with the sanction and authority of the person to whom these belong. But a more marked illustration still I fell in with lately, in a visit to the New Hebrides. Among some stone idols and other relics of heathenism which I had handed to me was an old smooth *staff*, made of ironwood, a little longer and thicker than an ordinary walking stick. It had been kept for ages in the family of one of the disease-making craft; was considered as the representative of the god, and was taken regularly by the priest when he was sent for to visit a case of sickness. The eyes of the poor patient brightened up at the sight of the stick. All that the priest did was merely to sit before the sick man, and, leaning on this sacred staff, to speechify a little, and tell him there was no further fear, and that he might expect soon to recover."

645.—TRACES OF THE CROSS IN DRUIDISM.—*Luke* xiv. 27.

“In the theology of the ancient Druids reference is made to the Supreme Being under the name of *Æsus* or *Mighty*, who was worshipped in the form of an oak tree. The Druids, in representing this divinity, with the consent of the whole order and neighbourhood, fixed upon the most beautiful tree they could discover, and, having cut off its side branches, they joined two of them to the highest part of the trunk, so that they were stretched out like the arms of a man, and made the form of the Cross. Near this transverse piece was inscribed the word *Thau*, for the name of God; while upon the right arm was written *Æsus*; on the left *Belenus*, and on the centre of the trunk *Therunis*. Towards the decline of Druidism, however, when a belief in the unity of God was lost in Polytheism, *Æsus* is sometimes said to have been identified with Mars, the god of war, though it is also believed that he was adored under another name, in the form of a naked sword. To him were presented all the spoils of battle.

646.—THE ADDER.—*Gen.* xlix. 17.

The natural history of the Bible is one of the most difficult subjects the Biblical antiquary has to deal with. In ancient times no natural science existed; and names of animals, plants, and other material objects were applied in a very loose manner. For example, the word “adder” in our version of the Bible is used to translate four different Hebrew words; and it is possible that the Hebrew writers applied their names for reptiles as loosely as our translators have done. In the text above Dan is compared to a *shephiphon*. The reptile intended is probably the *horned cerastis*, a species from twelve to fifteen inches in length, and very venomous. The *cerastis* is said to dwell in the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, and has a habit of lurking in the sand. When disturbed by horses trampling over them they are said to bite their heels, and render them so restive as often to throw the rider.

Another Hebrew word rendered “adder” in the Authorised Version is *tsepha*, or *tsiphoni*. Proverbs xxiii. 32 says that wine stingeth like a *tsepha*. The same word occurs in Isaiah xi. 8, xiv. 29, lix. 5, and Jeremiah viii. 17, where it is rendered “cockatrice.” The reptile intended was a poisonous one, but it is not known to what particular species it belonged.

Pethen is another word rendered “adder” in Psalm xcii. 13. It also occurs in Job xx. 14, 16; and in Isaiah xi. 8, where

it is rendered “asp.” That it was poisonous is all that is known respecting it. *Pethen* was “the deaf adder that stopped her ear” (Psalm lviii. 4).

In Psalm cxl. 3, we read: “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent, adder’s (*acshub’s*) poison is under their lips.” The latter half of the verse is quoted in Romans iii. 13, from the Septuagint.

The common adder or viper is tolerably well known in most lands, though it is not nearly so numerous in England and other civilised countries as it was in our fathers’ days. Those who know the English viper, however, will have a correct general conception of the venomous creatures above referred to.

647.—EASTERN MODE OF LAPPING WATER.—*Psalm ex. 7.*

An Eastern traveller observed a practice which may serve to illustrate the expression, “drinking of the brook (or stream) by the way.” “In an excursion across an Arabian desert, some of the Arabs on coming to water rushed to it, and stooping sufficiently to allow the right hand to reach the water, they threw it up into their mouths so dexterously, that I never observed any of the water to fall upon the breast; I often tried to do it, but never succeeded.” Turner, in his *Polynesia*, tells us that a thirsty Samoan on coming to a stream of water, stoops down, rests the palm of his left hand on his knee, and with the right hand throws the water up so quickly as to form a continual jet from the stream to his mouth, and there he laps until he is satisfied. Dr. Livingstone informs us that a similar practice prevails in Africa.

The verse quoted at the head of this paragraph is best regarded as portraying the Messiah, under the figure of a great conqueror, wearied with the battle and the pursuit of the flying foe, permitting himself only a hurried draught from the stream running beside his path, and then eagerly continuing the pursuit. There is, however, another interpretation, which does not appear to be either so natural or so forcible. Abraham is made the subject of the Psalm, and ver. 7 is rendered: “He has become full of the blood of their slain ones, like one who drinks waters that come abundantly from a stream that overflows by the way.”

648.—THE EARLIEST FORM OF IDOLATRY.—*Josh. xxiv. 2.*

The first references to idolatry occur in connection with Abraham. In those very early times “the objects of nature,

especially the heavenly bodies, were invested with a glory and a freshness which has long since passed away from the earth ; they seemed to be instinct with a divinity which exercised an almost irresistible fascination over their first beholders. The sight of ‘the sun when it shined, and of the moon walking in brightness,’ was a temptation as potent to them as to us it is inconceivable ; ‘their heart was secretly enticed, and their hand kissed their mouth.’ There was also another form of idolatry, though less universal in its influence. ‘There were giants on the earth in those days ;’ giants, if not actually, yet by their colossal strength and awful majesty ; the Pharaohs and Nimrods, whose forms we can still trace on the ornaments of Egypt and Assyria in their gigantic proportions—the mighty hunters, the royal priests, the deified men. From the control of these powers, before which all meeker men bowed down, from the long ancestral prepossessions of ‘country and kindred, and father’s honour,’ the first worshippers of One who was above all alike had painfully to disentangle themselves. Abraham was the first distinct historical witness, at least for his own race and country, to Theism, to Monotheism, to the unity of the Lord and Ruler of all, against the primeval idolatries, the *natural* religion of the ancient world.”—*Stanley*.

649.—A CITY ON A HILL.—*Matt. v. 14.*

Dean Stanley identifies the city our Lord referred to with Safed. One of the most striking objects in the prospect from any of these hills (on the western shores of the lake of Gennesaret), especially from the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes, is the city of Safed, placed high on a bold spur of the Galilean Anti-Lebanon. Dr. Robinson has done much to prove that Safed itself is a city of modern date ; but if any city or fortress existed on that site, at the time of the Christian era, it is difficult to doubt the allusion to it in “the city” lying on the mountain top. The only other, that could be embraced within the view of the speaker, would be the village and fortress of Tabor, which could be distinctly visible from the Mount of the Beatitudes, though not from the hills on the lake side. Either or both of these would suggest the illustration, which would be more striking from the fact that this situation of cities on the tops of hills is as rare in Galilee as it is common in Judæa. The city, beheld from a distance by parties travelling over the plain, acted as a guiding or direction post. Where there were no regular roads such landmarks were of great value.

650.—LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES.—*Matt. xvi. 6.*

The word “leaven” is often used in Scripture, and it is interesting as showing that the ancient bakers prepared their dough by a process essentially the same as that used in the present day. The leaven of the Bible was a piece of old dough in a high state of fermentation, which was inserted in the mass of dough which was prepared for the oven, “till the whole lump was leavened.” All fermentation is produced by the presence of a fungus, which grows with amazing rapidity in proper circumstances. While this plant is growing, certain substances become decomposed and changed into other substances: thus, when the juices of plants or fruits containing sugar are kept at a temperature of seventy degrees for several hours, the liquor becomes turbid, small bubbles of gas make their appearance, and the substance has begun to “work,” or ferment. Under the combined action of warmth, moisture, and oxygen, the albuminous matter becomes decomposed, and the change continues till the whole of the carbonic acid gas has been expelled. The liquor remaining is alcohol; and when this is examined by a microscope it is found to contain multitudes of oval-shaped, organised bodies, or cells; and this collection of cells is the yeast plant, whose presence is necessary to fermentation. At one time it was thought that fermentation in dough was very different from that just described, but modern research has shown that the starch and sugar contained in the flour are acted upon by the yeast plant just as the sugar of fruits is affected in the formation of alcohol. Leaven was looked upon as a thing that had undergone corruption and would corrupt other substances; hence its use was forbidden in all offerings made to the Lord; though offerings to be eaten by the priests might contain it. Christ very aptly compares the doctrine of the Sadducees to leaven (*Matt. xvi. 6*); and Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “purge out the old leaven” (*1 Cor. v. 7*), meaning the principles of Paganism and Judaism.

651.—A CURIOUS CEMETERY.—*Psalm v. 9.*

Describing the various kinds of tomb found in Eastern countries, Van Lennep says: “There is a very peculiar form of tomb in use among a certain class of people, which must have been in use in Persia and Chaldea during the Jewish captivity. It is an arrangement made by the Parsees. This people, who are the followers of Zoroaster, adhere to his doctrine in spite of terrible persecution, and are now mostly

found in the region of Bombay, where they enjoy the protection of the British Government. Their cemeteries consist of a circular wall, with vaults under an open terrace, upon which the bodies of the dead are laid. When the flesh has been devoured by the birds of prey, which are ever hovering about, the bones fall through the grated openings into the vaults beneath, where they remain untouched as long as the building stands. It is singular that the custom of the savage New Zealander is essentially the same ; for they bury indeed their dead in the ground, but leave them there only long enough for the flesh to decay, when they disinter them, carefully clean every bone, and lay them away in natural caves or artificial tombs ; nor can the disturbance of these bones in their resting-place be expiated by anything short of the death of the guilty."

652.—ABRAHAM'S SAGACITY.—*Gen. xi. 31.*

Josephus says that Abraham "was a person of great sagacity, both for understanding all things and persuading his hearers, and not mistaken in his opinions ; for which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God ; for he was the first who ventured to publish this notion, that there was but one God, the Creator of the universe ; and that as to other gods, if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, they each of them afforded it only according to His appointment, and not by their own power. This his opinion was derived from the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun and moon and all the heavenly bodies, thus : 'If,' said he, 'these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions ; but, since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain, that in so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him that commands them ; to whom alone we ought to offer our honour and thanksgiving.' For which doctrines, when the Chaldaeans and other people of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him, he thought fit to leave that country ; and at the command, and by the assistance of God, he came and lived in the land of Canaan."

It is further related by Josephus, on the authority of Nicholaus of Damascus, that Abraham reigned as a king at

Damascus, to which city he came from Chaldaea with a great army.

653.—THE PLAIN OF JEZREEL.—*1 Kings xviii. 45.*

We pushed on from Jenin towards Jezreel, which is about seven miles to the north. The low point on which Jezreel is situated runs into the plain of Esdraelon from the high ridge of Gilboa, dividing it into two unequal bays. Approaching Jezreel from the south, there is little apparent ascent, but the plateau on which it is built falls rapidly on the north side, by a descent of 200 feet or so, to the other portion of the plain, which lies between it and the range of the Little Hermon, or El Duhy, and which is called the plain of Jezreel, though it is but a bay of Esdraelon. On or near the spot where Ahab's palace is likely to have stood is an ancient tower, built I know not when, nor by whom. We ascended to its upper story, and there, through three windows, opening to the east, west, and north, obtained an excellent view of all the interesting portions of the surrounding landscape. Beneath us lay the famous plain, a rolling sea of verdure, yet lonely-looking, being without inhabitants. We saw no villages or huts dotting its surface, not even a solitary horseman, but only troops of gazelles galloping away into the distance, and some birds of prey, apparently vultures, wheeling in the sky, and doubtless looking out for work from their masters the Bedouin. This green prairie stretches for upwards of twenty miles towards the Mediterranean. It is the more striking from its contrast with the wild bare hills among which we had been travelling, and with those which look down immediately upon it. It separates the highlands of Southern Palestine from the hill country of the more lowland north, as the plain along which the railway passes from Loch Lomond to Stirling separates the highlands of Rob Roy from the lowland hills of the Campsie range that rise above the valley of the Clyde.—*Dr. N. Macleod.*

654.—SLIDING FEET.—*Psalm lxxiii. 2.*

An Indian Missionary writes :—“ During my journey in the Himalayas, I was often reminded of this and other similar passages of Scripture. The mountain roads are very narrow. They are not often wide enough for more than two men to walk together, and we generally find it easier to follow in single file. I never saw the men who carry loads walking two abreast. There are ascents and descents so steep as to require the traveller to plant his foot firmly and carefully, in order to

prevent his falling—*sliding*—down the hill. In some places the roads lead around the side of a mountain, or along the bank of a torrent, with a precipice, either perpendicular, or nearly so, immediately on one side of it, of hundreds of feet in height. Sometimes the sharp ascent or descent is combined with the precipice on one side, and a further complication of the difficulty is made by both a slope of road toward its outer edge, and a chalky or friable kind of stone in the pathway, affording no safe hold to the feet. In many of these places the traveller looks down a giddy slope of a hundred, a thousand, or two thousand feet, on which no foothold could be found, with the consciousness that a false step, or a breaking of the bank under his foot, would precipitate him into the ravine filled with stones. I came to a place where the bank above the road had slipped and filled the pathway, excepting about eight inches at the outer edge. As the ravine was not very deep, and therefore did not look very fearful, I rode around the heap, and my horse's hind foot broke down the remainder of the pathway. He carried me safely over, however; but I could not help quoting to myself the words of the Psalmist, ‘My steps had well-nigh slipped,’ etc. A great part of the wilderness in which the children of Israel journeyed is mountainous; so is the greater part of Judæa. The figures derived from this fact are very expressive. No one can feel their full meaning unless he has had some experience of mountain paths.”

655.—LEGENDS CONCERNING JOSEPH IN THE PIT.
Gen. xxxvii. 28.

Though altogether untrustworthy, the traditions that have grown up round the various Biblical narratives are often so curious as to interest the Scripture student. They represent how the surroundings and the bare outlines of the Bible accounts were filled in by powerful Eastern imaginations. Some of these legends give great vividness to the story of Joseph. We give one as a specimen.

It is said that Joseph was cast into a well near Jerusalem, and not far from the river Jordan. When the sons of Jacob got Joseph into the field with them they abused and beat him so unmercifully that they would have killed him but for the interference of Judah, who advised them to let him down into the well. Thereupon they lowered him down a little way, but as he held fast to the side of the well, they bound him and

took off his inner garment, intending to stain it with blood to deceive Jacob. Joseph begged in vain to have his garments restored, his brothers telling him with a sneer that the eleven stars and the sun and moon might clothe him and keep him company. When they had lowered him down half way they let him fall, and, there being water in the well, he was obliged to stand upon a stone, on which, as he stood weeping, the angel Gabriel came to him and revealed to him the fact that he should hereafter relate this deed to his brethren when they should not know who he was.

It is also said that the caravan which finally conveyed Joseph to Egypt, halted for three days in the neighbourhood of this well, and that as one of the company let down his bucket for water, Joseph got into it, and was drawn up. Judah, they add, carried food to Joseph daily while in the well, but not finding him there on the fourth day, he acquainted his brethren, who all went to the caravan and claimed Joseph as their slave, and eventually sold him to the merchants.

656.—EARLY TRANSMISSION OF SACRED HISTORY.—*Gen. v.*

Speaking of oral transmission of sacred history, from Adam to Moses, a recent writer makes the following remarks : “For 1,656 years the Lord bore with the sins of the Antediluvians, preserving to Himself a holy line in the posterity of Adam’s third son, Seth, who was said to have “lived by faith” (*Heb. xi.*), and the duration of whose individual and successive histories furnishes us with the chronology of the period from the day that Adam stood before the Lord “a living soul.” In the seventh century after Adam there arose his seventh lineal descendant, Enoch, of whom it is said that, after a life of 365 years (during which “he walked with God”) ‘he was not, for God took him.’ Enoch, though living in that early period, is said by Jude to have had a prophecy committed to him that concerned the last days “and the coming of Christ.” Now the 1,656 years just mentioned were spanned by only two intersecting human lives, those of Adam and Methuselah ; for Adam lived 930 years, and Methuselah must have lived on the earth 243 years with his great first father. The creation of Adam and Eve, and the removal of Enoch, with many other marvels, were probably frequent subjects of thought and converse between Noah and Methuselah, with whom he may have communed 600 years ; and Shem would have shared in the traditions which had been received direct from Adam.

"The very long life of Shem must, by the Hebrew chronology, have carried him into the era of Abraham, with whom he was contemporary for 150 years. He therefore lived fifty years with Isaac, and died only ten years before the birth of Jacob and Esau. Isaac lived on till the 34th year of his grandson Levi, the length of whose life (137 years), with that of his son Kohath (133 years), and his grandson Amram (137 years), are given us in Exod. vi. 16—20, though the ages of all the other sons of Jacob are left untold. The line (of tradition) is thus carried singly on to Moses. Now, as Levi lived 103 years after Isaac's death, the mother of Moses and Aaron would certainly receive from her father Levi's own lips what he had heard from Isaac, and Isaac from Shem, of the world before the flood. How few the links—how clearly to be traced! Adam, Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi, Jochebed, Moses, who is only the seventh from Adam, in another sense than Enoch."

657.—FETCHING THE WATER FROM SILEOM.—*John* vii. 37, 38.

In the description of the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles we are told that each Israelite, in holiday attire, having made up his *lulab* or bunch of branches for carrying in the hand, before he broke his fast repaired to the Temple with the *lulab* in one hand, and the citron in the other, at the time of the ordinary morning sacrifice. The parts of the victim were laid upon the altar. One of the priests fetched some water in a golden ewer from the pool of Siloam, which he brought into the court through the water-gate. As he entered the trumpets sounded, and he ascended the slope of the altar. At the top of this were fixed two silver basins, with small openings at the bottom. Wine was poured into that on the eastern side, and the water into that on the western side; whence it was conducted by pipes into the Cedron. The *hallel* was then sung, and when the singers reached the first verse of Ps. cxviii. all the company shook their *lulabs*. This gesture was repeated at the 25th verse, and again when they sang the 29th verse. The sacrifices which belong to the day of the festival were then offered, and special passages from the Psalms were chanted.

The current Rabbinical interpretation of the symbolism connected it with the gift of the latter rain, which was at this season ; and also with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The teaching of our Lord from this ceremonial, as given in

verse 38, is thus efficiently explained. “ This verse teaches the fuller truth that every one in living communion with Christ becomes himself the centre of spiritual influence. There is in him a power of life which, when quickened by faith, flows forth as a river, carrying life and refreshment to others. No spirit grasps a great truth which satisfies its own yearnings, as the waters of the fountain slake the physical thirst, without longing to send it forth to others who are seeking what he himself had sought. There is in him a river whose waters no barrier can confine. This is the spirit of the prophet, and the evangelist, of the martyr and the missionary. It is the spirit of every great teacher. It is the link which binds men together, and makes the life of every Christian approach the life of Christ, for he lives not for himself but for the world.”

658.—LEGEND OF JERICHO.—*Joshua vi.*

“ The guide told me that the *old men* of Riha said that the site of ancient Jericho was Tell-el-Matlab. The whole of Monday was taken up with the useless excavation of the neighbouring tomb. In the evening, talking over it in the camp with one of the *'Abid* employed by Lieut. Condor, I took down from his mouth certain traditions which seem to me sufficiently important to be related in detail, because they attach themselves in a confused but undoubtful sort of way to the name and story of Joshua. I attach the more importance to these legends—an echo of the Biblical narrative—because they were told me by a man extremely simple and almost a savage, before an Arab audience, who could have pulled him up short, and because the stories themselves have undergone changes too strange and too local not to be original.

“ The Bedawi began by relating how, not far from the *Tell-el-ithlé*, there exist ruins with *Dawāris* (*i.e.*, ruins of old things), and that there was the ancient Jericho, the City of Brass, *medinét en nahas*, surrounded by seven walls of brass. The city was in the power of the *Kouffar* (infidels), on whom the Imam Aly, son of Abou Taleb (he of the *mugam*) made war. Aly mounted his horse Meimoun, rode round the city, and overthrew its walls by blowing on them (*bén-néfés*), the ramparts falling of their own accord, stone by stone. This legend recalls the Biblical account of the taking of Jericho, and there is another circumstance which shows how, under the name of Aly, lies hid the personality of Joshua. After his combat with the Kouffar of the City of Brass, the day drew to an end, and

the infidels were about to profit by the darkness to escape, when the Imam Aly cried out, addressing the sun, ‘Return, O blessed ! return, O blessed !’ (*Erdja'y ya mâbarekè ! inthan yâ moubarekè !*). Immediately, by the permission of God, the sun, which was in the west, and on the point of disappearing behind the mountain, placed itself once more in the east, in the place whence it had started, and since that time the mountain above which the sun had been hanging at the moment of the miracle has been called *Dahrat eth-thiniyé* (the croup of the turning, from *inthana*, to turn, return). It is the low chain running at the foot of Mount Quarantania, above the *Tawahîn es-Soukkar*, which one passes in going from Ain es-Sultan to the *magam*, on a point covered with little heaps of stones (*chawâhid*) raised by Mussulmans, who can see from this place Neby Mûsa.

“As soon as the Imam Aly saw the sun return to the east, he cried to his servant Eblal (or Belal), who at this moment was on the mountain now called *Mouèddhèn Eblal*, to make the call for the morning prayer (*Edhân*) whence the name given latterly to the mountain (Place of the Call to Prayer by Eblal). Perhaps this name belongs to a group of the tribe of the Abîd, called Belalat. The miracle having assured victory to Imam Aly, he exterminated all the infidels, and demolished the city from the foundations, the fugitives being entirely destroyed by wasps.

“We easily observe in this simple legend the leading features of the story of the fall of Jericho, and the victory of Joshua over the Amorites, only in consequence of the absolute want of historical perspective which belongs to popular stories, facts and personages the most widely separate, are mixed up together. We remark as well a very pronounced tendency to localise details, by attaching them in the most rudimentary etymological manner to the names of places. It is not, however, without interest to have collected on the very spot where the events took place these popular accounts which have preserved their memory.”—*M. Clermont-Ganneau*, in “*Statements of Palestine Exploration Fund*.”

659.—WHO WAS GOLIATH?—*1 Sam.* xvii. 23 ;
2 Sam. xxi. 19.

It is singular to find narrated two distinct stories of the killing of a giant, whose name is given as Goliath, and it has given rise to various explanatory conjectures. Some think the real story is that of Elhanan, which has been wrongly attached to David ; but this is a conjecture, indeed, revealing

only the wilfulness of him who makes it. Others call the second Goliath *the brother of Goliath*, but with no authoritative ground. It is not in the least likely that the author of the Books of Samuel confused either the names or the incidents, and there should be no difficulty in supposing a second and later giant bearing the same name as the former one. Goliath might very probably be a family name. Jerome thinks that Elhanan is another name for David, and so the second narrative only repeats in brief the first story of David's victory.

660.—WEIGHING AS A FIGURE OF SPEECH.—*Dan.* v. 27.

Roberts remarks that this striking form of speech is much used in the East at this day. Thus, should two men be disputing respecting the moral character of a third person, one will say, “I know the fellow well, I have weighed him, and he is found wanting.” “He found wanting! You are much lighter than he.” “What, miscreant! do you wish to weigh against me?” “Thou art but as one part in a thousand.” “Begone, fellow, or I will soon weigh thee.” “Yes, yes, there is no doubt about it; you have weighed me; I am much lighter than you.” “What kind of times are these! The slaves are weighing their masters.” “Yes, the low castes have become very clever, they are weighing their superiors.” “What, woman! do you call in question the authority of your husband? Are you qualified to weigh him?” “The judge has been weighing the prisoners, and they are all wanting.”

661.—NEEDING ONLY TO WASH THE FEET.—*John* xiii. 10.

“I never understood the full meaning of those words of our Lord about being washed,” says Statham, “until I beheld the better sort of East Indian natives return home after performing their customary ablutions. Thus as they return to their habitations barefoot, they necessarily contract, in their progress, some portion of dirt on their feet; and this is universally the case, however nigh their dwellings may be to the water side. When, therefore, they return, the first thing they do is to mount a low stool, and pour a small vessel of water over their feet to cleanse them from the soil they may have contracted in their journey homeward. If they are of the higher order of society a servant performs it for them, and then they are clean every whit.”

662.—EASTERN LOCKS AND KEYS.—*Song Sol.* v. 4.

Locks are made both of iron and of wood; the wooden ones often of enormous size, with keys so large that they could hardly be carried except on the shoulder. Dr. Thomson reports spending a summer in an old castle whose great outer door had a lock and key which were almost a load to carry. The construction of the locks is such that a false key can scarcely by any possible chance fit them, and the difficulty is increased in proportion to the number and eccentric position of the *wards* into which the movable metal-drops are required to fall. The locks are always placed on the insides of the doors. The key consists of a piece of wood, often nine inches to a foot long, with pegs at one end near the extremity. This key is not inserted in a key-hole, but when the owner would unlock the door he puts his hand through a hole cut in the door, and so reaches to fit the key to the inside lock. The pegs of the key fit corresponding holes in the lock, and so the bolt is shifted aside. The key is either hung round the neck, attached to the girdle, or thrown over the shoulder. When several persons need to use the same key, they agree to hide it under a stone, or in some crevice in the wall near by.

The Eastern lock has been thus precisely described. "They are usually of wood, and consist of a partly hollow bolt, from fourteen inches to two feet long, for external doors or gates, or from seven to nine inches for interior doors. The bolt passes through a groove in a piece attached to the door into a socket in the door-post. In the groove-piece are from four to nine small iron or wooden sliding-pins, or wires, which drop into corresponding holes in the bolt, and fix it in its place. The key is a piece of wood, furnished with a like number of pins, which, when the key is introduced sideways, raise the sliding-pins in the lock, and allow the bolt to be drawn back."

663.—A JEW'S ACCOUNT OF THE MODERN RECHABITES.
Jer. xxxv. 2.

Rabbi Joseph Schwartz, in his *Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine*, after showing that the Rechabites were descendants of Heber the Kenite, and more remotely of Jethro, and producing evidence from the Rabbinical writings that they eventually settled in Yemen, says, "There are many traces of them at present; they live entirely isolated,

will not be recognised, and shun, or rather hate, all intercourse and every connection with the other Jews. They only sojourn in Arabia, and for the most part on the western shores of the Red Sea, and are engaged solely in the raising of cattle. In the vicinity of Jimbna, a seaport on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, they are found at times labouring as smiths, and have commercial connection with other Arabic tribes, (that is) they barter with them. They are called Arab Sebb (*i.e.*, Arabs who keep the seventh day), are generally esteemed and feared ; so that they form, so to say, a gigantic people, whose power and greatness excite fear. They only speak Hebrew and Arabic, and will form no connection or acquaintance with the Jews ; and should they be recognised as Jews, or if one should enter into conversation with them on the subject, they will quickly deny their origin, and assert that they are but of common Arabic descent. They will not touch another Arab, much less will they eat anything with him, even those things which are permitted to Jews ; and they always stay at some distance from the other Arabs, should their barter trade at times bring them together, so as not to come into any mediate or immediate contact. They always appear on horseback, and armed ; and people assert that they have noticed the fringes, commanded in Scripture, on their covering and clothes. They are occasionally seen in Palestine, but very seldom, and then, as it were, in secrecy and unrecognised. Some even say that several have been met with in Jerusalem, but never make themselves known, although the reason of this singular silence, and the anxious desire to escape detection, has remained hitherto a profound secret. At the same time it is clearly ascertained that they are Jews in every sense of the word, live according to the Jewish law, and also possess some knowledge of the learned Rabbis who flourished in the early ages of the Christian era.

664.—THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HELLENISTS AND HELLENISERS.—*Acts vi. 1 ; Phil. iii. 5.*

In pointing out the precise meaning of these terms, it is necessary first to state that *Hellas* was the favourite name for Greece, and a Hellenist is equivalent to a Grecian ; but a Helleniser is one who would convert others to Grecian thoughts and ways.

It should further be remembered that by the conquests of Alexander the Great, Grecian principles, language, and customs were very generally diffused throughout the world.

Dean Stanley says :—“If Grecian history died with Alexander, Grecian influence was created by him. If Hellas ceased, Hellenism, the spirit of the Greek race throughout the Eastern world, began its career.

“Colonies of the Jews were settled in Babylonia and Mesopotamia. They kept up their connection with their brethren in Palestine, but spoke the Aramaean language, and translated the Scriptures through the Targums, or Chaldean paraphrases. They were therefore called Aramaean Jews. Colonies of Jews were also settled in the countries where Greek was spoken ; Alexandria was their capital. They used the Septuagint translation of the Bible ; and they were commonly called Hellenists, or Jews of the Grecian speech.

“The difference of language would produce some separation between these two classes ; but there was a further and deeper diversity in their religious views. Oriental influences prevailed in the Aramaean theology. Greek civilisation and philosophy influenced the Hellenists or Grecians. About Paul’s time Philo lived, who was the chief of a school at Alexandria whose effort was to accommodate Jewish doctrines to the mind of the Greeks, and to make the Greek language express the mind of the Jews. “The Hebrew principles were disengaged as much as possible from local and national conditions, and presented in a form adapted to the Hellenic world. All this was hateful to the jealous Aramaeans. They had a saying, ‘Cursed be he who teacheth his son the learning of the Greeks.’”

Paul calls himself a Hebrew, meaning thereby an Aramaic Jew, as opposed to a “Grecian,” or “Hellenist,” and yet, as one born where the Grecian language was spoken, he was properly a “Hellenist.” And here we see plainly the distinction between the two words at the head of this paragraph. Paul, though a Hellenist in speech, was no Helleniser in theology. His sympathies were with the Hebrews, or Aramaic Jews, rather than with those who sought to accommodate Divine revelation to Grecian philosophy. He neither adopted nor taught Greek habits or Greek opinions, though this accusation was freely raised against him. He was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews.”

665.—ZERAH.—*2 Chron. xiv. 9.*

To the less instructed reader of Scripture this suggests the idea of an army of negroes, and they are led to think of the

region south of Egypt, to which the name of Ethiopia properly belongs ; but the better informed will be unable to see the possibility of such an army as that of Zerah marching through the length of Egypt from Ethiopia, as it must have done in order to reach Palestine, in the reign of such a prince as Osorkon I., who succeeded Shishak on the throne of that kingdom. . . Little less than the previous conquest of Egypt must have taken place before this vast invading force could have reached the land of Judah from the quarters usually indicated, and this we know was not the case.

All the difficulty seems to have been created by one of the commonest accidents of translation—that of rendering a large term by another, of more limited signification in the language into which the translation is made. In the original here, Zerah the Ethiopian is “Zerah the Cushite,”—a name applicable to all the sons of Cush, the son of Ham, and even to the inhabitants of the region originally settled, but afterwards abandoned, by them. Now the name Cush is very rarely in Scripture applicable to the African Cush, or Ethiopia proper, but almost always to the Asiatic Cush, in Arabia. The original settlements of the great Cushite family can be traced at the head of the Persian Gulf, where the name Khusistan, or “land of Cush,” still denotes an important district, anciently renowned, by the classically softened name Susiana. Thence, all along *the coast* of Arabia, down the eastern coast and up the western, the course of the great settling migration of the Cushites may be traced, in the continued occurrence of the names of the great Cushite families, as denoting localities dispersed over the peninsula in the very track which, from the antecedent probabilities created by the physical constitution of the country—a vast wilderness belted by fertile mountains towards the coasts—a progressive colonisation would be likely to follow. Hence Arabia, or certain important parts of it, would be probably called Cush, not only as originally settled by Cushites, but as still the abode of many Cushite tribes, the distinct origin of some of which can, it appears, be recognised even at this day.

It may be shown, by the internal evidence of the passages of Scripture in which the name of Cush occurs, that it was in Arabia ; and in fact this is evinced in the very passage under our consideration. It appears by the results that the invaders were a mixture of pastoral and settled tribes. They had tents and cattle—the latter in great numbers ; and they had also chariots and towns. The pastoral herds inevitably fix them

to Arabia, if only as confirming the improbability of their having passed through Egypt.

Besides, one of their towns to which they fled, and where they attempted to make a stand, was Gerar in the southern wilderness, which fixes them to Arabia Petræa, and the parts about and between Egypt and Palestine. Many doubtless came from more distant parts of Arabia, for this huge host seems to have been a great gathering of Cushite and other tribes for this promising expedition, the prime movers of which were doubtless such of them as lay nearest to Palestine, who stimulated the remoter tribes to join them in this enterprise.—*Kitto.*

666.—JONAH'S GOURD.—*Jonah iv. 5—7.*

No gourd actually grows up in a single night, and the expression, “which came up in a night,” or literally, “which was the son of a night,” must be regarded as giving in strong poetic figure the fact of swift growth. It is a sort of poetical antithesis to the other expression, “perished in a night.” The gourd is a climbing vine of rapid growth, always trained to run up trees, trellis, and temporary booths, the size of its leaves affording a pleasant shade. The fruit, though large, is not heavy, and hangs on the vines swinging and drying in the wind. One kind of gourd is made into bottles and slippers. Being dried and emptied of its seeds it makes a useful bottle, and is specially used to keep things in (such as salt) which are liable to suffer from damp. Another variety of the gourd is made into a very agreeable preserve, cooked in honey or grape juice boiled down. It appears, however, that the gourd plant, in consequence of its light and pulpy texture, is very liable to be destroyed by grubs or worms, which attack the root, and so involve the speedy withering of the plant.

The graceful form of the gourd, its golden blossoms, and the beautiful outline of its leaves, led to its being adopted in Palestine as an architectural ornament.

667.—FREEDOM OF ENTRANCE AT FEAST TIMES.
Luke vii. 36—38.

“In very early times it was customary to *sit* at table during meals, but in later ages the practice of reclining on sofas or couches while eating became almost universal. Tables were used of different forms. The lower end was left open for those who waited at table to enter, in order to place and remove the dishes, etc., etc. This custom of reclining at meals

enables us to understand several passages of Scripture which would otherwise appear difficult. Thus the woman who entered the Pharisee's house while Jesus was there at meat, *stood at His feet behind Him* weeping, and she *washed His feet* with her tears, etc. Now, in *sitting* at table, the feet would be *under* the table ; but a person lying on a sofa in the manner described, on one side with his face towards the table, would naturally have his feet *outermost*, and near to any one *standing behind*. Thus, also, our blessed Lord washed His disciples' feet as they lay on their couches around the table. When at dinner in the vice-consul's house at Damietta, 'we were interested in observing a custom of the country. In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side seats uninvited, and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them.... We afterwards saw this custom at Jerusalem.... We were sitting round Mr. Nicolayson's table, when first one and then another stranger opened the door and came in, taking seats by the wall. They leaned forward and spoke to those at table. This made us understand the scene in Simon's house at Bethany, where Jesus sat at supper, and also the scene in the Pharisee's house, where the woman, who was a sinner, came in, uninvited, and yet not forbidden.... In this latter case, . . . Christ is dining at the Pharisee's table. As the feast goes on the door opens, and a woman enters and takes her seat by the wall just behind Him. The Pharisee eyes her with abhorrence ; but as custom permits it, he does not prevent her coming in. After a little time, as Jesus is reclining with His feet sloped towards the back of the couch, the woman bends forward, pours her tears on His feet, and anoints them with precious ointment.'—*Narrative, etc.*

668.—THE EXPIATORY AND GUILT OFFERING.—*Ler. v. 17—19.*

Ewald says :—“The ultimate origin of this sort of sacrifice will be found in the innate feelings of sin and guilt which must arise in man in some shape or other from the very first. We must remember, in addition to this, how powerful was the dread, in early antiquity, of an outbreak, or further extension, of the ‘great wrath of God ;’ with what anxious care every evil, whether manifest or merely apprehended, was referred to the possible or actual guilt of man, and how hard it was for man to learn consistency in religion. We can then under-

stand the wide extension of the expiatory offering, with its array of atonements and purifications, which were already developed and in full bloom among many heathen nations before Jahveism came into existence."

"There is an important distinction to be observed between the *expiatory* and the *guilt* offering. On the one hand provision was made for the case of a private member of the community who felt the pressure of conscious guilt, or an obscure religious distress, which he might regard as similar, and who felt accordingly, or rather was obliged to feel, that he was shut out from the favour of his God as at present enjoyed by his co-religionists, and that he was therefore as good as excluded from the community. Such a man, if he would win once more this favour, and be received again into God's community, was to bring a *guilt* offering, or, as it can also be termed, an offering of *penitence*. Often, however, this was not enough, without his making reparation for any damages which he had unintentionally inflicted. A *guilt* offering, accordingly, must specially abase the individual *as an individual*. Real guilt can only exist, and can be ascribed to a man only when he has committed the deed consciously, and without just excuse.

"But if by a prince or priest was committed a transgression which occasioned public scandal, or the whole community were involved in it, then the *expiatory* offering was required. The simple expiatory offering had more of a general and public character, while the *guilt* offering was a more private affair, which was, however, morally compulsory on the individual, if he was again to take his place in the community, and share its holiness with a glad feeling of freedom. The expiatory offering brings simple *expiation*, the *guilt* offering adds to this *reparation*, in the form of a self-inflicted penalty, and makes this an indispensable condition of the atonement."

669.—TENTS UNDER TREES.—*Gen. xviii. 4.*

Thus spoke Abraham to his celestial guests who visited him at Mamre; and the expression refers to a curious feature in Arab life—the same to-day as it was thousands of years ago. The patriarch had taken up his abode under the tree, using it as he would have used a tent; though it appears that one or more tents were at the same time standing near the tree. The principal residence for the time, however, seems to have been under the tree, as here the guests were invited to rest, and here also they received Abraham's hospitality. Abra-

ham's residence under the tree was but the ancient type of what travellers find in the East to-day. An Arab will not, as a rule, plant any tree except for the sake of its fruit; but when he finds a large tree whose spreading branches and foliage will protect him as well as a tent, he declines the labour of erecting the latter, and takes up his abode under the natural shelter. He smooths the ground under it, if requisite, erects a low platform, and even occasionally surrounds the area with a wall—thus making as permanent a dwelling as perhaps his heart could desire.

It may be mentioned that there still stands near Hebron an ancient oak that tradition asserts to be the identical tree under which Abraham lived. The tradition, of course, is worthless, as no tree would be likely to live so long. It is a venerable tree, and perhaps a lineal descendant of Abraham's tree. It measures 20½ feet around the trunk, and its shadow is 89 feet in diameter. Several families might take refuge under the shelter of such a giant.

670.—KNOCKERS AND KNOCKING.—*Rev. iii. 20.*

Van Lennep, in giving an account of present day customs in the East, says: "The gates of the rich and the doors of caravanserais and other large buildings have a knocker made of a bent bar of iron, hung by a hinge, so as to strike upon a broad-headed nail. Otherwise there is always a ring set in the door, by which it is pulled to, and this is used as a knocker by striking it against the door with the open palm. Officers of justice rap on the doors with the ends of their staves of office, and some people, impatient of delay, try to make more noise by striking the door with a stone. The sleep of Orientals is proverbially heavy, and loud and repeated knockings at doors are sometimes heard at the dead of night, accompanied by the reiterated shouts of some belated traveller, re-echoed by the narrow streets, and arousing all the barking curs of the neighbourhood; then a parley ensues, the gate opens to admit the stranger, and the street is again hushed and silent." Compare the narrative given in *Acts xii. 12—16.*

671.—THE DIAL OF AHAZ.—*Isa. xxxviii. 8.*

The precise nature of this marvel we are unable to explain. Some mode of measuring time, to us unknown, is plainly indicated, and as the word "degrees" literally means steps, or stairs, it has been supposed that a shadow cast on a staircase by a column showed the height of the sun in the heavens.

This shadow would travel upwards as the day declined, and its return down ten steps, beheld from Hezekiah's sick chamber, would be the most impressive emblem of the new lease of life bestowed. Speculations as to the secondary or intermediate cause of the phenomenon, though often indulged, seem alike futile. To suppose a return of the earth upon its axis is a violent and useless solution of the mystery; the suggestion of some alteration in the laws of refraction, or the interposition of some medium to divert the solar rays, leaves the matter very much as it was; while an ingenious theory, founded on the fact of a partial eclipse of the sun, B.C. 713, affords no intelligible explanation. Enough that the sign was given, the event followed the prediction; the receding shadow was both a symbol and a pledge to the king that his prayer was granted. Nor were the proper remedies neglected. According to the medical practice of the East, a plaster of figs was applied to the tumour, and the cure was complete.—*Dr. Green.*

672.—Bribes to Judges.—*1 Sam. viii. 3.*

Speaking of the administration of justice in Egypt, Mr. Lane says: “The rank of a plaintiff or defendant, or a bribe from either, often influences the decision of the judge. In general the Naib (deputy of the judge) and Mooftee (chief doctor of the law) take bribes; and the Chadee, chief judge (usually written Cadi) receives from his Naib. On some occasions, particularly in long litigations, bribes are given by each party, and the decision is awarded in favour of him who pays highest. This frequently happens in difficult lawsuits; and even in cases respecting which the law is perfectly clear, strict justice is not always administered, bribes and false testimony being employed by one of the parties. The shocking extent to which bribery and suborning false witnesses are carried on in Moslem courts of law, and among them in the tribunal of the Chadee at Cairo, can scarcely be credited.”—“*Modern Egyptians.*”

673.—Laws Against Cruelty to Animals.—*Lev. xvii. 13, 14.*

The humanity of the Jewish regulations may be pointed out by abundant illustrations. One is found in the above passage. Care was to be taken, even of animals killed in hunting, that they were *quite dead* before they were cut up and prepared for eating. There is great danger lest those who violently kill animals should become indifferent to their suffering; and practices have been known to prevail against which legislation

may well be directed. Bruce, the traveller in Abyssinia, gives an illustration. "Not long after our losing sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia, we overtook three travellers driving a cow before them. They had black goatskins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands; in other respects they were but thinly clothed; they appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fattened for killing, and it occurred to us all that it had been stolen. This, however, was not our business, nor was such an occurrence at all remarkable in a country so long engaged in war. We saw that our attendants attached themselves in a particular manner to the three soldiers that were driving the cow, and held a short conversation with them. Soon after, we arrived at the hithermost bank of the river, where I thought we were to pitch our tent: the drivers suddenly tripped up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her forefeet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to my great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride of her before her hind legs, and gave her a very deep wound in the upper part of the buttock. From the time I had seen them throw the beast on the ground I had rejoiced, thinking that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to us; and I was much disappointed to hear the Abyssinians say that we were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where I intended. Upon my proposing that they should bargain for part of the cow, my men answered, what they had already learned in conversation, that they were not then to kill her, that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened my curiosity; I let my people go forward, and stayed myself till I saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef-steaks, cut out of the upper part of the buttock of the beast: how it was done, I cannot positively say, because, judging the cow was to be killed, from the moment I saw the knife drawn, I was not anxious to view that catastrophe, which was by no means an object of curiosity. Whatever way it was done, it surely was adroitly, and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields. One of them still continued holding the head, while the other two were busy in curing the wound. This, too, was done not in an ordinary manner. The skin which had covered the flesh which was

taken away was left entire, and flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding part by two or more small pins or skewers."

The simple Mosaic requirement that the blood of the animal should be first and fully shed, effectually prevented such cruelties as these.

674.—KEEPING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN ENGLAND.
Lev. xxiii. 39, 40.

It is a curious fact that in the time of Cromwell the Jews were permitted to settle in London, to build synagogues, and to practise the rites of their faith. When this became known, Jews from the Continent, and from different parts of Britain, gathered together in the seventh month, and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles among the willows on the border of the Thames. This was the last public keeping of the feast in England.

675.—BAAL-BERITH.—*Judges viii. 33.*

In other paragraphs it has been shown that Baal, as the supreme god, was worshipped under a variety of forms and names. The principle on which the adaptations of the deity were made to the common concerns and relations of men is indicated in this god of the Shechemites, Baal-Berith. The word is a Hebrew one, and means "Lord of the Covenant." He is supposed to preside over contracts and covenants, which occupied so important a place in Eastern business and social relations. He corresponds therefore to similar representations of deity that we find in other countries. He is the *Zeus Orkios* of the Greeks, and the *Jupiter Fidius* of the Romans. Some learned men, particularly Bochart, identify this deity with a goddess called Beroe by the Greeks, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, and the patron goddess of the town of Beritus in Phoenicia, to which she had given her name. Others conjecture that this idol represented the Cybele of the Greeks and Romans. What seems certain is, that he was generally appealed to as a witness and judge in all matters of controversy, and so was the supreme deity conceived as under one special aspect, and sustaining one particular relation. It has been suggested that the name means, "the god who comes into covenant with his worshippers;" but this is a needless weakening of the title, as this may be said of every god that pretends to the name.

676.—A TRADITIONAL LETTER BY PONTIUS PILATE.
Mark xv. 1—14.

The following letter, said to have been written by Pilate to the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, was extant in the early Church, and though regarded as spurious by most modern critics, was believed to be genuine by the ancients :

“Pontius Pilate to Claudius wisheth health. (The Emperor’s full name was Tiberius Claudius Nero.)

“By the envy of the Jews a thing has lately happened here (Jerusalem), of which I myself was witness, which will involve them and their children in a dreadful punishment. For their fathers having assurance of God that He would send them His saint from heaven, to be their real king, and who was to be born of a virgin, God did really accomplish this promise to them, while I was Governor of Judæa. And the Jews having seen that He restored sight to the blind and health to the paralytic, that He cleansed the lepers, drove out devils from those that were possessed, raised the dead, had command over winds, walked dry upon the sea, and did many other miracles, while the whole multitude looked upon Him as the Son of God, the chief of the Jews conceived an extreme envy and jealousy against Him. They seized Him, and delivered Him up to me, and formed many false accusations against Him, saying He was a magician, and a transgressor of their law. As to myself, thinking what they said of Him to be true, I caused Him to be whipped, and then delivered Him up to their will. They crucified Him, and set a watch at His sepulchre. But the third day He rose again, while my soldiers guarded His tomb. The malice of the Jews was such that they gave money to the soldiers, and bade them say that His disciples took away His body. But when the soldiers had received the money, they could not forbear owning the truth. They declared that Jesus Christ was risen, and that the Jews had given them money not to speak of it. Of this I thought proper to give you notice, that credit may not be given to the Jews.”

677.—TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN.—*Acts xvii. 6.*

This strong figure for creating disturbance and commotion, and subverting the established order of things is found several times in Scripture. The connection of the figure in each of the following passages should be observed:—2 Kings xxi. 13; Psalm cxlvii. 9; Isaiah xxiv. 1, xxix. 16. Matthew Henry wisely says:—“In one sense it is true that wherever the

Gospel comes in its power to any place, to any soul, it works such a change there, gives such a wide change to the stream, so directly contrary to what it was, that it may be said to turn the world upside down in that place, in that soul. But in the sense in which they meant it it is utterly false: they would have it thought that the preachers of the Gospel were incendiaries and mischief-makers wherever they came; that they sowed discord among relations, set neighbours together by the ears, obstructed commerce, and inverted all order and regularity, they were charged with turning the world upside down, when it was only the kingdom of the devil in the world that they thus overturned."

678.—LIBATIONS OF WATER.—*1 Sam. vii. 6.*

This was evidently a symbolical act: it is not one enjoined in connection with the Mosaic ceremonies. The Targum suggests that the act signified the penitence of the people; perhaps represented their tears of sorrow; or poured on the ground it might typify their desire that their sins might be forgotten, "as waters that pass away." Mr. Roberts says that pouring water on the ground is a very ancient way of confirming an oath in India. There is reason to suppose that, in ancient times, almost every solemn act was accompanied by libations, or the outpouring of some fluid, generally wine, and we know that water was employed in the earlier times for this purpose; but in the law nothing but wine and blood are directed to be poured out before the Lord. There may possibly be some reference to the compact into which the people now entered, and on which Samuel acted in their behalf; and the idea may be that their words had gone forth not to be recalled; and may be illustrated under this view by reference to the beautiful text, 2 Sam. xiv. 14: "We are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." Oaths were certainly, under some such idea, confirmed anciently by libations. Thus Ulysses says of Phidon,

"To me the monarch swore in his own hall,
Pouring libation."

679.—SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO IRON.—*Gen. iv. 22.*

Tubal Cain is the first mentioned worker in iron, but from his time we get all sorts of references to manufactures in iron; e.g. iron weapons or instruments (Num. xxxv. 16; Job. xx. 24); barbed irons, used in hunting (Job xli. 7); an iron bedstead (Deut. iii. 11); chariots of iron (Josh. xvii. 16, and elsewhere);

harrows of iron (2 Sam. xii. 31); iron armour (2 Sam. xxiii. 7); tools (1 Kings vi. 7; 2 Kings vi. 5); horns (1 Kings xxii. 11); nails, hinges (1 Chron. xxxii. 3); fetters (Psalm cv. 18); bars (Psalm cvii. 16); a pen of iron (Job xix. 24; Jer. xvii. 1); a pillar (Jer. i. 18); yokes (Jer. xxviii. 13); pan (Ezek. iv. 3); trees bound with iron (Dan. iv. 15); gods of iron (Dan. v. 4); threshing instruments (Amos i. 3); and, in later times, an iron gate (Acts xii. 10); the cautery (1 Tim. iv. 2); breastplates (Rev. ix. 9).

Much stress has been laid upon the absence of iron among the most ancient remains of Egypt; but the speedy decomposition of this metal, especially when buried in the nitrous soil of Egypt, may account for the absence of it among the remains of the early monarchs of a Pharaonic age.

680.—THE WITNESS ALTAR.—*Joshua* xxii. 34.

In *Biblical Things*, First Series, No. 340, brief allusion was made to the discovery of the site of this altar. The passage from Lieut. Condor's report may be interesting to our readers.

From the internal evidence we are able to point with tolerable accuracy to the approximate position and character of the Great Witness Altar. It must be near and above Jordan, on some hill-top west of the river, between the modern village of Seilun and the ford of the Damieh, placed in a conspicuous position, and possibly giving ruins of some magnitude. In addition to which we should hope to find remains of the name in some modern Arabic word. There is but one spot in Palestine which will fulfil these very definite requirements, and that spot is perhaps the most conspicuous in the country. From the heights of Ebal its sharp cone stands out against the white valley; from the castle of Kaukab el Hawa, near Gennesaret, it is visible at a distance of thirty miles; from the shores of the Dead Sea and the plains of Jericho it stands forth prominently as a great bastion closing the Jordan valley; from the eastern highlands it is no less conspicuous, and from the Judæan watershed it is visible at a great distance. Every traveller who has been to Jericho has seen it; all have asked what it is, and been disappointed to find that it was of no historical importance, and had only a modern Arabic name. For nearly a month I lived at its foot, firmly convinced that so conspicuous a landmark must have played a part in history, yet utterly puzzled as to what that part could have been. To

every explorer it has been a point of interest, and yet I know of hardly one who has examined it. The place in question is the high cone of the Kurn Surtabeh, the Surtabeh of the Talmud, and one of the most important of our trigonometrical stations on the eastern border of the survey. . . . Upon its summit remains to this day the ruin of a great monument of the kind indicated in the Bible account. At the foot of the mountain lie the Gelilloth of Jordan, the ground being of that peculiar broken character to which I suppose the word specially refers. When, in addition to these indications, we find a trace of the original name, the conclusion seems irresistible. For some time I sought this in vain on the map. It is a question which I leave to the learned whether there can be any connection between the name Surtabeh and the Hebrew Metzebeh—the altar. The remaining summits of the block are called respectively El Musetterah, Ras el Kuneiberah, and Ras el Hafireh. The real name, as often happens, has deserted the place itself, but may still be traced in the neighbourhood. I have already pointed out that the natural ascent to the Kurn is from the north. On this side I find marked on our map as a valley name Tal 'at Abu 'Ayd. *The ascent of the father of 'Ayd.* The peculiar use in the vernacular Arabic of the word Abu, as meaning that which produces, leads to or possesses, would make the natural translation of this term to be, "The going up which leads to 'Ayd." Though the monument itself has lost its real name, the ascent to the summit, by which the strong men of the two and a half tribes must have first gone up, preserved the memory of the Witness Altar.

681.—THE HABITS OF THE JACKAL.—*Song Sol. ii. 15.*

The word rendered "foxes" in this verse should have been translated "jackals." These creatures never live far from the sea. They are numerous along the western coast of the Peninsula and on the Syrian shore. They burrow in the hill-side, like the fox; are rarely seen, except at night, and generally feed in company. Soon after sunset, and when the shades of night begin to appear, their plaintive moan is heard in all directions, as they call one another to go out in quest of food. When they bark more than usual during the night it is commonly considered a sign of the change of the weather. They are very fond of grapes, and a vineyard will soon be cleared out unless the hedges are kept in good repair, and the watchmen are wide awake. They have a

keen scent, and are cunning in the accomplishment of their purposes. When about to start in a particular direction, they set up a loud barking, which attracts the village dogs towards the spot they are leaving, and thus clear the road before them elsewhere ; and when feasting upon a carcase, some of them leave it from time to time to go and bark elsewhere, so as to divert the attention of their enemies.—*Lennep.*

682.—THE SAVIOUR'S BURIAL PLACE.—*Matt.* xxvii. 59, 60.

Since the days of the Crusaders, and especially since the Reformation, the tomb of Christ has been comparatively neglected, few Protestants feeling any extravagant interest in the mere position of His place of sepulture. In one of the quarterly journals of the Palestine Exploration Society the following interesting notes appeared :—

“All accounts concur in describing it as an excavated sepulchre, a new and recently finished work, and not as yet used for the purposes of burial. The general idea concerning the tomb is that it was single-celled. When constructing it, Joseph could never have had any idea of the sacred use to which it would be applied, and must have had in view a multi- (not uni-) locular (many Eastern tombs consist of a large chamber with recesses in the walls for the corpses) *family* sepulchre. The narratives uphold the idea of a multi-locular (many-celled) tomb ; had it been otherwise, the angel's invitation, ‘Come, see the place where the Lord lay’ (*Matt.* xxviii. 6), would have been unnecessary, for a glance would have revealed the interior to the two Marys. St. Mark's narrative is more clear ; he describes evidently an anti-chamber, from which the loculi (cells) branch off ; and in this case there were apparently only two rows, right and left. On entering the chamber, the Marys find the angel ‘sitting on the right side,’ probably at the entrance of the lately tenanted loculus (cell), which he points out to the affrighted women. ‘Behold the place where they laid Him.’ According to St. Luke, it was only on entering the chamber that the women found not the Lord's body (*xxiv.* 3) ; if it had been a one-celled tomb, a glance from the entrance would have revealed its emptiness. Again, the presence of a loculus branching off from the chamber would necessitate the stooping of Peter to see the grave-clothes laid by themselves (*xxiv.* 12). So with St. John, the chamber of the sepulchre admits both Peter and John (*xx.* 8), from which they view the vacant cell, and carefully-arranged grave-clothes.

“The tomb was closed by a great stone rolled to the entrance. How was this done? Here again the general idea is very vague, and refers to the laborious rolling of a huge spherical mass of rock (for only such could roll) to the door of the tomb, no attention being paid to the fact that such a mass could not accurately fit the upright entrance, much less receive the protection of the seal. The Rev. J. Porter describes a Jewish tomb which was accurately closed by a millstone-like slab which was rolled down an inclined plane, at the bottom of which was the circular entrance to the sepulchre. Some such arrangement would be necessary to meet the requirements of St. Matthew's narrative, where the angel rolls away (not back) the stone and sits upon it."

Respecting the locality of the tomb the writer says:— “According to St. Matthew's narrative we are, I think, driven to the conclusion that at the scene of the burial there were two hill-sides, with a valley between them, for he describes the two Marys as “sitting over against the sepulchre” (xxvii. 61), as if, supposing the tomb had been on the side of Olivet, the Marys had been looking on from the opposite side of the valley, beneath the city walls, but yet in full view, the distance being about 150 yards. . . . St. John minutely describes the locality (of the tomb):—‘Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden (xviii. 1), which St. Matthew and St. Mark describes as near a place, or state, or hamlet, called Gethsemane (*lit.* Gath, winepress; shemen, oil). Now, was the garden of the agony identical with the garden of the burial? If not, why does St. John use the same word (*κῆπος*—*kēpos*) to describe two localities? If they were (identical), then we can understand why our Lord ‘ofttimes resorted’ to the garden which witnessed His agony, and was to be the scene of His burial, and in its gloomy shade He trod in solitude the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. Gethsemane witnessed the agony and burial; if this be allowed, then it witnessed also the crucifixion, for the garden was in the place where He was crucified. . . . The women watched, ‘beholding afar off’ (Matt. xxvii. 55). St. Mark describes the centurion in command as standing ‘over against Him’ (xv. 39), and he and St. Luke also describe the women as ‘watching afar off.’ I should fancy that the site of the crucifixion (and burial) must be sought along the Bethany road, on the eastern side of the valley of Jehoshaphat.”

683.—BARLEY AND CHASTITY.—*Numb.* v. 14, 15.

The association of barley with ideas of chastity is found in other countries and religions. It has been suggested that the association is due to the threatening aspect of the awns (*arista*) of the barley. They stand out as if they were guarding the grain, and as saying to all, “Touch not.”

In Herodotus’s account of the Hyperboreans, he represents their women as sending gifts to Delos, wrapped in barley straw. Virgins had been employed originally to carry the gifts ; but as some of these died by the way, the inhabitants of the extreme north bound their offerings up in the straw of the plant that was emblematic of chastity, and had them carried by the intervening nations from the north to Delos. The women of Thrace likewise offered gifts of barley-straw to Royal Diana, the goddess of the chase.

684.—THE GENERAL FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY OF PALESTINE.—*Deut.* viii. 7, 8.

The following summary is from Milman :—“It is almost impossible to calculate with accuracy the area of a country the frontier of which is irregular on every side. Lowman has given three different estimates of the extreme of territory occupied by the twelve tribes ; the mean between the two extremes approaches probably the nearest to the truth. According to this computation, the Jewish dominion, at the time of the division, was 180 miles long by 130 wide, and contained 14,976,000 acres. This quantity of land will divide to 600,000 men about $21\frac{1}{2}$ acres in property, with a remainder of 1,976,000 acres for the Levitical cities, the princes of tribes, the heads of families and other public uses. Assuming this estate of $21\frac{1}{2}$ acres assigned to each household, of course a larger proportion of pasture must have been given to those tribes who subsisted on their herds and flocks than of arable to those who lived by tillage ; the portions of the latter, therefore, must be considerably reduced. On the other hand, the extraordinary fertility of the whole country must be taken into the account. No part was waste ; very little was occupied by unprofitable wood ; the more fertile hills were cultivated in artificial terraces ; others were hung with orchards of fruit trees ; the more rocky and barren districts were covered with vineyards. Even in the present day the wars and misgovernment of ages have not exhausted the natural richness of the soil. ‘Galilee,’ says Molte Brun, ‘would be a paradise were it inhabited by

an industrious people under an enlightened government.' No land could be less dependent on foreign importation ; it bore within itself everything that could be necessary for the support of a simple agricultural people. The climate was healthy, the seasons regular ; the former rains, which fell about October, after the vintage, prepared the ground for the seed ; the latter, which prevailed during March and the beginning of April, made it grow rapidly. Directly the rain ceased the grain ripened with still greater rapidity, and was gathered in before the end of May. The summer months were dry and very hot ; but the nights cool and refreshed by copious dews. In September the vintage was gathered. Grain of all kinds—wheat, barley, millet, zea, and other sorts grew in abundance ; the wheat commonly yielded thirty for one. Besides, the vine and the olive, the almond, the date, figs of many kinds, the orange, pomegranate, and many other fruit trees, flourish in the greatest luxuriance. Great quantity of honey was collected. The balm tree, which produced the opobalsamum, a great object of trade, was probably introduced from Arabia in the time of Solomon. On the whole, the best pastures were on the east of the Jordan ; the central places were the most productive grain lands ; the hills of Judah and Benjamin had the richest vineyards and olive grounds."

685.—THE THREAT ON IDLE WORDS.—*Matt. xii. 36.*

The Greek words employed in this verse are *pān rēma argón*, and the explanation depends on the exact force attached to the adjective *argón*. Some say that it is equivalent to *ponerón*, or wicked, injurious. Observing, however, the connection of the passage, this rendering of the word cannot be maintained. Christ is not speaking of specifically wicked words, but of the feigned piety of the Pharisees, and their affected zeal for the public welfare. We must therefore understand a certain kind of words, or discourse, which, under the appearance of sincerity or candour, is often the worst possible, and condemns a man because it is uttered with an evil purpose. By Greek usage the word *argón* means *rain*, *idle*, then void of effect, without result, followed by no corresponding event. Therefore in the text the words *rēma argón* should mean empty or vain words or discourse ; i.e., void of truth, and to which the deed does not correspond. Our Lord refers to the empty, inconsiderate, insincere language of one who says one thing and means another. Tittmann gives the sense of the passage as follows :—" Believe me, he who uses false and insincere

language shall suffer grievous punishment ; your words, if uttered with sincerity and ingenuousness, shall be approved ; but if they are dissembled, although they bear the strongest appearance of sincerity, they shall be condemned."

686.—HARAN AND ABRAHAM TESTED BY FIRE.—*Gen. xi. 28.*

The following curious tradition illustrates the disposition of the Eastern peoples to account in some elaborate way for every historical event. The extravagances of untrustworthy traditions help to confirm our confidence in those more sober ones retained for us in the Sacred Word :—

When Abraham, say the Jews, was brought before Nimrod for destroying the idols, the king commanded him to worship the fire ; but Abraham assured him that it would be much more profitable to worship the water which extinguished the fire. "Why, then," says Nimrod, "worship the water." "No," says Abraham, "it were better to worship the clouds which furnish the water." Nimrod bade him worship them ; but he replied that "it would be better to worship the wind which disperses the clouds." "Well," says Nimrod, "I see it is your intention to deride me ; I must therefore tell you briefly that I worship none but the fire, and if you do not do the same, it is my intention to throw you into it, and then I shall see whether the God you worship will come to your relief. Immediately Abraham was thrown into the fiery furnace. In the meantime they questioned Haran, Abraham's brother, concerning his faith. He answered, "If Abraham succeeds I will be of his faith, but if not, of Nimrod's. Thereupon Nimrod ordered him likewise to be cast into the furnace, where he was quickly consumed. But Abraham came out of the furnace without receiving the least injury. The Jews say that this account of the death of Haran agrees with *Gen. xi. 28*, where it is said that Haran died *in the presence of his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in the fire* (so they regard Ur) of the Chaldees. There is some show of reason for regarding Ur as fire, for the Hebrew or Chaldee word signifies fire, and is used in that sense in several passages of the Bible. But there can be little doubt that the interpretation above given is somewhat fanciful.

687.—MODERN FESTIVALS.—*Nehemiah viii. 14—17.*

We may well hope that the great festival times held under the Mosaic rule were in many important respects higher and

nobler than those associated with heathen and Mohammedan systems ; yet in certain general features it seems probable that the festivals of Eastern countries so far agree that the account of one may be used to illustrate others. The Mohammedans have two festivals which they steadily observe, under the name of the Great and the Little Bairam.

The festival of Great Bairam is held on the tenth day of the last month of the Arabic year ; that of Little Bairam closes the fast of the Ramazan, and is celebrated with great rejoicing by the common people, especially at Constantinople. It is ushered in by the discharge of cannon, the beating of drums, and sounding of trumpets. The feast lasts for three days, during which Constantinople exhibits a spectacle of festive gaiety and mirth of every kind. On one of the feast days the Sultan proceeds in state from the seraglio to one of the mosques : and on the last day of the Bairam there is a display of splendid fireworks from the seraglio.

Mr. Morier witnessed the festivities of Bairam among the Persians, at Bushire, on the Persian Gulf. "The fast of Ramazan was now over. The moon which marks its termination was seen on the preceding evening just at sunset, when the ships at anchor fired their guns on the occasion ; and on the morning of our visit the Bairam was announced by the discharge of cannon. A large concourse of people, headed by the *peish-namuz*, went down to the seaside to pray ; and when they had finished their prayers, more cannon were discharged. Just before we passed through the gates of the town, in returning from our visit, we rode through a crowd of men, women, and children, all in their best clothes, who by merry-making of every kind were celebrating the feast. Among their sports I discovered something like the roundabout of a country fair, except that it appeared of much ruder construction. It consisted of two rope seats suspended in the form of a pair of scales from a large stake fixed in the ground. In these were crowded full-grown men, who, like boys, enjoyed the continual twirl, in which the conductor of the sport, a poor Arab, was labouring with all his strength to keep up the machine."

The following passage is taken from M. Van Lenne's *Travels in Asia Minor*. "To-day, being Bairam, the people were evidently in good humour, and seemed determined to enjoy themselves. The owner of Haji Moorad (the smallest of the donkeys on which the muleteers rode), began to dance and sing, and went through a series of somersaults which made us every moment expect that he would break his back. But the performance appeared to

produce a great sensation in the village ; they came down in mass to see the wonderful feat, with much of the same feeling, probably, with which the fashionable world of Paris or London turn out to gaze in raptures at the *pirouettes* of a new *danseuse* ; and as soon as he had finished, most of the boys and even some of the girls straightway began turning somersaults upon the grass around us. After that came a trial of strength. The question was, who could lift Haji Moorad entirely off the ground. As his saddle was very large for him, it was taken off, and the ambitious aspirant to immortal fame passed his arms around the middle of the body, united his hands underneath, and endeavoured to lift the animal off his feet. Our chief muleteer was the only successful competitor. During the contest Haji had been kindly supplied with some extra handfuls of straw, and appeared in no wise concerned with what was going on about him."

688.—WAS JOB'S DISEASE ELEPHANTIASIS ?—*Job ii. 7.*

It seems to have been a very ancient notion that Job suffered from the black leprosy, commonly known from the swelling of the limbs as *elephantiasis*. Origen tells us that it was found in one of the Greek versions. It was also entertained by Abulfeda.

The passages which are considered to indicate this disease are found in the description of his skin burning from head to foot, so that he took a potsherd to scrape himself ; in its being covered with putrefaction and crusts of earth, and being at one time stiff and hard, while at another it cracked and discharged fluid ; in the offensive breath, which drove away the kindness of attendants ; in the restless nights, which were either sleepless or scared with frightful dreams ; in general emaciation ; and in so intense a loathing of the burden of life, that strangling and death were preferable to it. There is, however, in this too little distinct description of symptoms to enable us to determine the precise form of the malady ; all that can be said is that the disease bears a greater resemblance to elephantiasis than to any other form of disease.

689.—EARLY HIEROGLYPHIC OF THE DEITY.—*Gen. i. 1.*

Hermes was one of the most celebrated gods of Greece. He was the *Mercury* of the Romans ; and is identified with the Egyptian *Thot*. When Pagan philosophy began to be mingled up with Christianity in the form of Neoplatonism, this Egyptian Hermes was looked upon as the author of all know-

ledge and wise inventions among men. Hence he received the high appellation of *Hermes Trismegistus*, or the thrice greatest. Clemens Alexandrinus mentions as extant in the second century, forty-two books of Hermes, containing all knowledge, human and Divine. These are probably the productions of the Neoplatonist writers. In them is found an interesting explanation of one of the most ancient symbolical representations of the Deity. It is a figure made up of three parts—a serpent, wings, and a circle (or globe). The globe is said to typify the essence of God, which Hermes Trismegistus indifferently called the Father, the First Mind, the Supreme Wisdom. The serpent emerging from the globe was the vivifying power of God, which called all things into existence. This he named the Word. The wings implied the moving or penetrating power of God, which pervaded all things. This he called Love. The whole emblem was interpreted to represent the Supreme Being in His character of Creator and Preserver.

The definition of the Deity by Hermes Trismegistus is poetically sublime. “God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere.”

690.—THE WORD “JEOPARDY.”—*2 Sam.* xxiii. 17;
1 Chron. xi. 19.

In these two passages the Hebrew is simply “that went with their lives.” Not very unlike is the expression in *1 Sam.* xix. 5, “For he did put his life in his hand and slew the Philistine.” So chap. xxviii. 21, *Jud.* ix. 17, M.R., “Cast his life far”—i.e., adventured it. *Psalm cxix.* 109, “My soul [i.e., life] is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget Thy law.” What this means is explained in the next, and parallel, sentence, “The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from Thy precepts.” The etymology of the English word has been variously given. We agree with Aldis Wright in taking it from *jeu parti*, an even game, in which the chances are equal. The analogy of “hazard” is, we think, strongly in favour of this view, “hazard” being an *unlucky throw* [not in the Old Testament]. Both terms took their origin from games of play, and were transferred to real life as well. Just so “*Jacta est alea*” was applied to the famous passage of the Rubicon. This idea was not in the Heb., however, with which we may rather compare, for instance :

“Oh, when the king did throw his warder down,
 His own life hung upon the staff he threw.”

Shakespeare, Henry IV., 2nd Part, Act iv. sc. 1.

691.—THE WILD BOAR.—*Psalm lxxx. 13.*

This creature, which abounds in all parts of the country, is the farmer's greatest plague. As the Turks cannot eat his flesh, they only kill him when they can no longer endure his depredations ; they leave the carcase either to be devoured by vultures, or carried away by some Christian who has bought it for a trifle. The wild boar has a keen scent, and is extremely cunning, but his eyesight is poor. He prefers to lie in the unapproachable swamps of the plain during the day, and comes out to feed in the fields at night ; but where swamps are not at hand, he retires to the thickets of the mountains, where, in the winter, he takes shelter under some tall and outspread pine-tree, which throws a wall of snow around his retreat. He is hunted and speared on horseback in Mesopotamia, when he can be driven out of the swamp into the level plain. But in Asia Minor the natives waylay him at night, stealthily approach him in his lair during the day, or unite in large numbers, and make a *battue*, men and dogs driving the boars out of the thickets upon the hunters, who wait for them at every issue. The sport is exciting, and attended with danger when an old male, or *azly*, is wounded, in which case he turns upon his pursuers, whose only safety consists in lying flat upon the ground, and not allowing him to raise them with his snout. This is, indeed, the only animal from which the sportsman has any danger to apprehend ; for his semicircular tusks, kept always sharp, and deriving force from a short neck and powerful back, are by no means to be trifled with.”—*Lennep.*

692.—AXES.—*Matt. iii. 10.*

Axes, as well as other common tools, were known to the Jews when first met with in history. Whether they ever used stone axes it is not easy to decide, nor of much importance if it were. The Hebrew Bible has several names for axe, although the difference is not observed in the translation. The *gurzen* derives its name from a root-word signifying “to cut or sever.” The head was of iron, and fastened by a thong or otherwise to a helve or handle of wood. It was liable, it seems, to slip from the handle ; hence it is enacted (Deut. xix. 5) that “when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve (literally iron slips from the wood), and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die ; he shall flee unto one of those

cities (of refuge) and live." From this passage and several others, it appears that the *garzen* was used for felling trees; it was also employed in cutting wood into shape (1 Kings vi. 7). Another Hebrew name for axe is *chereb*, but this is a word of very wide application, as it sometimes denotes a sword, at others a knife or razor; and, in addition, axe, hatchet, and chisel are all denoted by the same word. Possibly we have in this singular fact a remnant of that barbaric age when occupations were not "differentiated"—when a given man was alternately butcher and barber, wood-cutter, joiner, and soldier, and when the same cutting instrument served his turn in every business in which he engaged. Another word for axe is *casshil*, but this occurs but once, viz., Psalm lxxiv. 6. *Mazzerah* and *megerah* are terms used to designate the instruments by which David tortured the Ammonites of Rabbah (1 Chron. xx. 3). They were both cutting instruments, the latter probably a saw. *Ma'atsad* is a Hebrew word, rendered "ax" in the margin of Isa. xliv. 12; the instrument was used both by carpenters and blacksmiths, and was probably a curved knife or a bill. *Kardom* was a large axe used for felling trees. It was with this instrument Abimelech cut the wood by which he burned the tower of Shechem (Judges ix. 48, 49). The last needing notice is the *mappets*, or battle-axe, or more probably a maul or mace (Jer. li. 20).

693.—ANOINTED STONES.—*Gen. xxviii. 18, 19.*

Anointed stones of a conical shape, called *bactylia*, are said to have been worshipped by the ancient Phœnicians. Some think they are meteoric stones, which, having come down from heaven, are easily associated with some deity. In Roman mythology, Abadires was the name given to a stone which was worshipped as having been swallowed by Saturn. The "standing images," referred to as prohibited in Lev. xxvi. 1, are thought to be these bactylia; and such stones of memorial are frequently observed in Eastern countries in the present day. Mr. Morier says: "Every here and there I remarked, that my old guide placed a stone on a conspicuous bit of rock, or two stones, one upon another, at the same time uttering some words, which I learnt were prayers for our safe return."

In the light of this explanation we may regard Jacob's act as a familiar and customary one with the Eastern traveller; its special interest arising from the mood of mind and heart to which he had been brought by the gracious night vision.

Bochart suggests that the name Bactylia may be derived from Bethel, where Jacob first anointed a pillar as a sacred memorial.

694.—CAMELS WITH THE DOUBLE HUMP.—*Gen. xxxii. 15.*

From the tablets it is evident that the Assyrians were acquainted with the two species or varieties of the camel which existed in Western Asia—that with the single and that with the double hump. M. Van Lennep made some interesting observations upon these varieties of breed when travelling in Asia Minor.

“On leaving Izeddin our direction continued west. Passed a collection of black Koordish tents, whose flocks were feeding in the low grounds, and were attracted by the sight of two camels of the two-hump species feeding among the bushes, and guarded by some men. Went up to them, and found them to be very fine animals, both females, one of which had a male colt of the same breed. The humps on the back were extremely high and conical; the hair was longest at the top, and one hump hung over on one side. The men who had charge of them said they were never saddled, but kept entirely for breeding purposes, the cross of this breed with the common one-humped camel being generally considered best fitted for Asia Minor.

“This was the first time I had seen the bare back of a double-humped camel in this country. Having spent by far the most of my time during the last twenty-five years in the north-western part of Asia Minor, where the camel is not a very common animal, all my efforts to see the creature had proved unavailing. I had fancied I might have seen him with his back covered over by the pack-saddle, which hid his humps. But I was now inclined to believe I had never met him before. I had asked many Koords and other keepers of camels about this species; they all professed to have seen it, and several said that some of their own camels, now away, were of that breed, but when I asked them what was the difference between the two breeds, they only returned evasive answers. Some said the males were all two-humped; others, that they get two humps when fattened and not allowed to work. Since I examined the two camels we now saw, however, I have had abundant means of judging as to the correctness of these statements. This is the Bactrian camel, capable of enduring the cold, and introduced into Asia Minor solely for breeding purposes. A yearly supply of camels comes from Mesopotamia;

they belong to the Arab breed, are tall, one-humped, short-haired, and of a light colour ; they are sold on their arrival for as low a price as £7 and £8 apiece. But they are not accustomed to the cold of the climate; nor can they travel in mud, or climb mountains. The cross between them and the Bactrian camel produces the best breed for the climate, and has but one hump. This improved breed reproduces itself, but is apt to degenerate, and is renovated both by fresh importations from Mesopotamia and the crossing of the Bactrian, which is kept in all the southern portions of Asia Minor in small numbers for this purpose. The Bactrian breed itself is kept pure by means of a few females that are never loaded or ridden. The notion that the dromedary is the two-humped camel, used only for riding purposes, the two humps serving to keep the rider from falling in front or behind, while the one-humped camel is a beast of burden, was long ago exploded. The dromedary is any camel which is used for riding purposes ; any camel may be made a dromedary or a pack-camel as the owner thereof chooses ; but there is no more ground for dividing the camel into two species, one of which shall be called the dromedary, than there is for dividing horses into distinct species according as they are used for riding or for the pack-saddle."

695.—THE MIRACLE OF CROSSING THE JORDAN.—*Josh. iii. 16.*

Dr. Kitto gives the following paragraph. But it is not so unreasonable as he thinks that we should presume that the miraculous result was produced by Divine using and overruling of natural agencies. And we may reverently inquire what natural agencies could conceivably have been employed. Evidently the cause of the stoppage of the stream was found some miles above the place where Israel crossed. It is quite possible that, by an earthquake, the river bed was so obstructed that the waters were dammed back into the Lake of Galilee ; which might rise for hours before the obstacle could be overcome, and the waters again flow down to the Dead Sea. We cannot affirm how the miracle was wrought, but God works by the forces He has created, and all natural forces are in His hand.

"The miracle connected with the crossing of the Jordan seems to us a more signal one than the passage of the Red Sea ; and it appears as if expressly framed not only to effect its own objects, but to relieve the other from all naturalistic interpretations. In connection with the Red Sea passage, we hear

travellers and scholars talk learnedly about east winds, and tides, and shallows, so that, whether intentionally or not, the fact as a demonstration of Divine power is explained away or attenuated. But nothing of this is possible in the case of the passage of the Jordan. The fact must be taken as it stands. It was a miracle or it was nothing. There has not been, and there cannot be, any explanation of it on natural grounds. And if, therefore, men are obliged to admit this, it becomes scarcely worth their while to tamper with the Red Sea miracle, unless they would deny the authority of the narrative altogether. But what was the use of this miracle ? as it seems that the Hebrews could have entered the land without crossing the Jordan at all ; and as a little earlier, or a little later in the season, or somewhere higher up, they could have crossed the Jordan without a miracle, what need was there for this gratuitous display of that Divine power which is said to be never vainly nor idly exerted ? We have not far to seek for an answer. In chap. v. 1, the reason for the miracle is shown in the result which is produced : "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites," etc. To produce this impression was beyond question the primary object of the miracle. We can ourselves, in some measure, judge of the importance of this impression being made upon the minds of the people with whom the Israelites were about to commence a terrible warfare ; but any military man will be able to tell us, with great intensity of conviction, that for the purposes of the war such an impression upon the mind of any enemy, however produced, is equal in value to a succession of victories ; for it is seldom until an enemy has been repeatedly beaten that he can be brought into that state of enfeebling discouragement which this verse describes."

696.—CINNAMON.—*Exod.* xxx. 23.

This substance is also mentioned Prov. vii. 17; Song Sol. iv. 14; Rev. xviii. 13. The identification with the modern cinnamon, which is imported chiefly from Ceylon, can only be stated as probable. It may be interesting to note the mode of its cultivation in Ceylon. The best cinnamon gardens are on the south-western coast, where the soil is light and sandy, and the atmosphere moist from the prevalent southern winds. The plants begin to yield the cinnamon when about six or seven years old, after which the shoots may be cut every three or four years. The best kinds of cinnamon are obtained from twigs and shoots ; less than half, or more than two or

three inches in diameter are not peeled. The peeling is effected by making two opposite, or, when the branch is thick, three or four, longitudinal incisions, and then elevating the bark by introducing the peeling-knife beneath it. In twenty-four hours the epidermis and greenish pulpy matter are scraped off carefully. In a few hours the smaller quills are introduced into the larger ones, and in this way congeries of quills are formed, often measuring forty inches in length. The bark is then dried in the sun, and afterwards made into bundles, with pieces of split bamboo twigs. It is imported in bales or chests, the bundles weighing about 1 lb. each.

697.—HAZAEEL'S WATER-TREATMENT.—*2 Kings viii. 15.*

A very curious explanation of this supposed murderous act has been suggested. Hazael, one of King Benhadad's officers, had been told on the previous day that he should succeed to the Syrian throne on the death of the king; and it is usually supposed that, being impatient of delay, he hastened the king's death, and immediately took possession of the vacant seat. Bruce, in his travels, however, gives an account of a fever which prevailed in Abyssinia, called the *nedad*, and he says, "If the patient survives till the fifth day, he very often recovers by drinking water only, and throwing a quantity of cold water upon him, even on his bed, where he is nevertheless permitted to lie without attempting to make him dry or to change his bed, till another deluge adds to the first. Such a custom suggests the possibility that Hazael was doing his best, or perhaps only pretending to do his best to effect a water-cure.

The "thick cloth" mentioned is supposed to be, from the original word used, either the "pillow" or the "coverlet," the cloth or mat placed between the head and the upper part of the bedstead, which in Egypt and Assyria was often so shaped as to render pillows unnecessary.

698.—THE BAPTISM OF JEWISH PROSELYTES.—*Acts xiii. 43.*

There were among the Jews two kinds of proselytes—viz., proselytes of the gate and proselytes of righteousness. Only the latter were received into the Jewish Church by the rite of baptism. After circumcision had been administered, and a short interval had elapsed, the proselyte was baptised in the following mode, as described by Mr. Lewis in his *Hebrew Antiquities*. "Being placed in the water, the *Triumviri*, or judicial consistory of three, who alone have the power of

admitting to baptism, instruct him in some of the weightier and some of the higher commands of the law ; and then he plunges himself all over his body ; for it was a rule that when the law speaks of washing of the flesh, or washing of garments, it intends the washing of the whole body ; so that if but the tip of the finger, or any of his hair remain unwashed, the man was still in his uncleanness. When he came out of the water, after his baptism, he made a solemn prayer that he might be purified and clean from his Gentile pollution, and become a sound member of the Jewish Church. A woman, when she was baptised, was placed by women in water up to the neck, and two disciples of the wise men instructed her in the precepts of the law as she stood. Then she plunged herself, at which they turned away their eyes, and avoided looking upon her as she came out. It was necessary that three should be present at the baptism of a proselyte as witnesses, who took care that the ceremony was regularly performed, and briefly instructed the catechumen in the principles of the religion he was entering on."

There can be no doubt that baptism was applied to the infant children of proselytes. The Babylonian Talmud says, "If, with a proselyte, his sons and daughters be made proselytes, that which is done by their father redounds to their good." The Mishna speaks of a proselyte of three years old, which is thus explained in the Gemara :—"They are accustomed to baptise a proselyte in infancy, upon the approval of the consistory, for this is for his good." And the Jerusalem Talmud treats of the difference of baptising an infant, which has been found, for a slave or for a freeman.

699.—THE HOUSE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON.

1 Kings vii. 2, 3.

The structure here described was manifestly built entirely of wood, and was called by the distinctive title of "Lebanon-forest House." The name arose, no doubt, out of the fact that the materials were taken from the celebrated cedar forest of Lebanon. But why should such a structure be described with so much minuteness ? Most Europeans would prefer a good substantial stone building to the very best timber house ; and so perhaps would Solomon. But among the Jews wooden houses were unknown ; all their dwellings, as of the Syrians now, were built of sun-dried bricks, and in a style of architecture the reverse of attractive. Hence the erection of a wooden palace in Jerusalem was the greatest

event of Solomon's reign, next to the building of the temple ; for neither the king nor his people had ever beheld such a structure. Besides, the material afforded an opportunity for the display of architectural taste ; and there can be little doubt that the palace in question was vastly more beautiful than any other the king possessed.

700.—PLANTS CONFOUNDED WITH THE MANNA.
Exod. xvi. 14, 15.

In the anxiety to find a rationalistic explanation of feeding Israel with manna, it has been suggested that this substance is the exudation of a shrub familiar and abundant in the desert districts. Two plants have, indeed, been named. One of these, the *Alhagi*, or camel's thorn (*Manna Hebraica*), abounds in the Sinaitic desert, of which it is a native. It is also common in the Egyptian desert. In summer the so-called manna exudes in small drops from its leaves, and falls to the ground. A highly imaginative person only, and one wholly unacquainted with the shrub and the exudation, could propose this plant as equal to the maintenance of two millions of people for forty years in the wilderness.

The other manna-yielding tree which, more than the camel's thorn, has been mentioned in explanation of this passage, is the tamarisk, or tarfa-tree (*Tamarix gallica* var. *mannifera*), a native of the Eastern deserts. The exudation is caused by the puncture of an insect (*Coccus maniparus*). The puncture is made in the tender branches and twigs, and from this the saccharine matter known as manna flows at irregular periods. Sometimes over a wide area no exudation takes place for a period of four or five years. This is not to be confounded with the manna of commerce, a substance yielded by one of the Oleaceæ—the *Ornus*, or manna-ash, which contains the principle known to chemists as *mannite*. The exudation of the tamarisk is sugar ; it does not contain mannite.

The Monks of St. Katherin, on Sinai, gather the manna of the tamarisk, and sell it to Europeans at a high price as the veritable food on which Israel fed for forty years in the wilderness. "It is found in shining drops on the twigs and branches. What falls upon the sand is said not to be gathered. It has the appearance of gum, is of a sweetish taste, and melts when exposed to the sun or the fire. The Arabs consider it a great delicacy, and the pilgrims prize it highly."—*Duns.*

Bonar gives the following twelve reasons why manna cannot be identified with this exudation of the *Tarfa-tree* :—

“ 1. The tarfa exudes only small quantities. 2. The tarfa only exudes at certain seasons—March and April. 3. The tarfa does not yield its exudation regularly, even once a year. 4. The exudations of the tarfa *come out* from the branches of the tree, they do not *come down* from the air or sky. 5. The tarfa exudations are in composition and consistency somewhat like honey. They are quite unfit for grinding, or pounding, or baking, or boiling. 6. The taste of manna is said to have been as *fresh oil* (*Num. xi. 8*). No one who has tasted the tarfa-manna would compare it to oil. 7. The tarfa-manna does not stink, or breed worms, in a single night. 8. The tarfa-produce does not evaporate as soon as the sun arises (*Ex. xvi. 21*). 9. Tarfa-manna’ does not give particular quantities on particular days. 10. The tarfa-manna is purgative medicine, not food. 11. The Israelites knew well the tarfa-tree, but they did not recognise the manna. 12. Israel could not have subsisted so long on this one food.

701.—BABYLONIAN LEGENDS OF THE WARS IN HEAVEN. *Jude 6.*

From these we are led to regard all these wars as having a purely atmospheric origin, so far as Eastern ideas of them are concerned. The war of the seven evil spirits against the moon is expressly stated, in the Accadian hymn which records it, to have been a mythological description of an eclipse ; and the seven evil spirits themselves are described as the dark storm-clouds. The leader must be identified with Tiamat, “the dragon of the sea,” whose name, which signifies “the deep,” denotes the anarchic power of the universe and represents both the night and the tempest. The heavenly champion who subdues these powers of darkness and restores light and order to the world is always Merodach ; and Merodach, as his name and attributes prove, is merely a form of the Sun-god. In his solar character he is also the mediator and benefactor of mankind.

702.—HEAVEN ACCORDING TO THE HINDOOS.—*John xiv. 2.*

The Jews believed there were seven heavens, and the Hindoos have the same opinion ; for Brahma, in endeavouring to find out the summit of the pillar of fire, soared into the “seventh heaven.” The latter people also have four especial

degrees of bliss : the first is called *Sara-loga*, “God’s world ;” the second, *Sameeba* “near to God ;” the third, *Saroobam*, God’s image ;” the fourth, *Sayutcheyam* “to be united to or absorbed in him.”

To the first degree of bliss go those who have made a pilgrimage to a holy place, or who have paid for the lights of a temple, or who have used holy ashes or holy water, or those who wear sacred beads, or who praise the gods, or those who honour Brahmins, or who perform *poosy* to Siva, or those who use the five letters (that is a, e, i, o, u), for invocations, or who perform the thirty-two charities. In that state there is great happiness ; there are the five books ; there are beautiful females, who dance and sing ; there no work, no sickness, no sorrow : there the water is like ambrosia ; and there all the wishes are satisfied.

To the second degree of happiness go those who are called *keerikarar*, that is, “workers ;” who perform the *Yagum*, or who take holy water (from the Ganges) to distant countries ; or those who place iron pins on their heads, so as to make it impossible for them to sleep in a recumbent position ; those who fast much, or who roll after the car, or walk on the fire, or who tie thorns on their bodies, or in any way mortify their persons. Their happiness consists chiefly in praising God, and their holiness cannot be expressed,

To the third state go the *Yogees*, those who are ignorant of the sex, who never shave or cut the hair, or pare the nails ; who never speak, who wander about the earth from the left to the right, who live in a constant state of abstraction on Divine subjects, who eat nauseous food, who live in the desert, and go about in nakedness. In this world they gain the image of God ; and in the other they are his servants and messengers.

To the fourth degree of happiness go the *Nyane*, literally, “philosophers ;” they are the highest kind of ascetics, and are perfect Stoics : “they pay no respect to temples, to ceremonies, to tanks, to works, to castes ; they have no sweets, no bitters, no sorrows, no joys, no sickness, no health, no heat, no cold ; they hate the world, and the world hates them ; they have no friends, and they know no enemies ; they live and are dead, they are dead and yet live. After this world they are free from births and deaths ; they are absorbed in the Deity, which is supreme bliss.”

The Hindoos also believe that there is a glorious city situated on a lofty mountain in the heavenly world. (See

Heb. xii. 22 ; Rev. iii. 12, xxi. 10.) The walls form a square, are made of solid gold, and are beautified with precious stones. The gates are large, and are ever open to the good ; and there stand the guards ; there the light is as if produced by ten millions of suns ; there lives the Supreme Siva, and from his head flows a sacred river. There are the five-trees, which give whatsoever is asked of them ; their names are Arechanthanum, Katpagam, Santhanam, Paresatham, and Mantharam. There are also four other trees in the celestial mountain. “ To go to the mount of Siva ” signifies to go to the heavenly world.—*Roberts.*

703.—EASTERN AQUEDUCTS.—*2 Kings xx. 20.*

Van Lennep writes, “The most interesting memorial of antiquity found in Amasia [Asia Minor] is an aqueduct, cut for a long distance into the face of the hard limestone rocks which close up the valley upon its eastern side. This piece of work can be traced for the distance of about three miles south of the town. It is, indeed, in so good a state of preservation that it would require but little expense to make it answer its original purpose. It consists of two perpendicular cuts and a level floor. The marks of the chisel are yet clearly seen upon it, and in order to show its width Mr. Strohl rode his spirited horse in it for a considerable distance. The width is about five feet ; the depth greatly varies in different places, but is rarely less than the width, and it stands about six feet above the road, which is constantly rising with it ; the height, however, increases at a distance from the town. The Turks always have a legend ready for everything which passes their comprehension, and so they relate that the daughter of the King of Amasia, having vowed that she would marry no man but he who should bring to her palace the water of a certain spring, one of her lovers set himself down to accomplish the undertaking, and, being poor, he had to do the whole work with his own hands. But nothing discouraged by the greatness of the task, he persevered until he had attained the age of ninety-five, and with it the end of his task. He thereupon went to the palace to claim the princess as his bride, but found that she had been long dead.”

The above description may aid us in representing the aqueducts, or water-ways, referred to in Scripture, which conveyed the water of distant springs into the cities.

704.—DATES IN CYRUS'S REIGN.—*Ezra i. 1.*

In an important paper, read by Mr. T. Pinches to the Society of Biblical Archæology, an account was given of certain dated tablets of the last collection obtained by the late Mr. George Smith, and now in the British Museum, throwing great light on chronology between 605 and 517 B.C. There are four of these documents, dated 2nd year of Cyrus, 11th year of Cyrus, 7th year of Cambyses, and 11th year of Cambyses respectively. The date of the second tablet of the above list is as follows:—"Month Kisley, day 25th, year 11th; Cambyses King of Babylon, at this time also Cyrus his father King of Countries." This, Mr. Pinches suggests, proves that Cyrus, in his 9th year, abdicated the throne of Babylon in favour of his son Cambyses, Cyrus himself ruling the other provinces until his death, with the title of "King of Countries." The last tablet shows that Cambyses was regarded by the Babylonians as having reigned eleven years, so that, far from having been killed on his return from Egypt, he must have lived to rule again after the suppression of the revolt of the false Bardes and of the false Nebuchadnezzar. This discovery, which seems to settle the date of the 11th year of the reign of Cambyses, thus overthrows all the previous notions of Assyrian chronology.

705.—THE ROCK SNAKE, OR FIERY SERPENT.—*Numb. xxi. 6.*

The rock snake "generally occurs from seven to thirteen feet in length, but Schlegel mentions having seen one that measured twenty feet. The colours are brilliant and lively. A pale yellowish coffee-brown colour predominates on the upper parts, losing itself in numerous grey marblings on the flanks, which scarcely allows the beautiful yellow colour of the ground to be seen, but which spreads uniformly over the belly. The head is variegated with red; the muzzle is marked with a square brownish-black spot, another is seen above the eye, and a third, broad and club-shaped, is prolonged from behind the eye to the neck. The iris is of a golden yellow colour. The adults are more brilliantly coloured than the young. The head is distinct from the body, is tolerably broad, elongate, depressed on the summit, and terminates in a narrow rounded muzzle. The nostrils, large and round, are slightly distant from each other, and are directed backwards. The eye is nearly lateral, and directed slightly forwards. The tail is much smaller in circumference than the trunk, and is rather short

and conical. On the continent of India this serpent is known to the natives by the name of the *bora* or *pedda poda*."

V. Schubert, travelling in the district of Sinai, remarks :— "In the afternoon they brought us a very mottled snake of large size, marked with fiery red spots and wavy stripes, which belonged to the most poisonous species, as the formation of its teeth clearly showed. According to the Bedouins these snakes, which they greatly dreaded, were very common in that neighbourhood."

Alexander in crossing Gedrosia lost many men through the serpents which sprang upon those passing by from the sand and brushwood. Strabo also remarks the dangers of this kind to which travellers in the peninsula of Sinai were exposed.

706.—DAYSTAR.—*2 Peter i. 19.*

This is the "morning star." The dawn of the day is accompanied by the rising of the morning star. The sentence should be rendered, "Until the *Phōosphōrus* [Lucifer, 'light-bearer'] shall arise," the bright and morning star of Rev. xxii. 16. Properly and materially speaking, this is the planet Venus, but spiritually and really Jesus and His teaching are alluded to. In Milton's *Lycidas* (168-171) we read :—

"So sinks the daystar in the ocean bed, [*Lycidas* lost]
And yet anon repairs his drooping head, [*Lycidas* regained]
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky."

707.—BABYLONIAN TRADITIONS OF THE CREATION. *Gen. ii. 4.*

From Berossus, a learned Babylonian, who wrote about B.C. 260, the following curious representations of the creation are taken. They represent the ancient national legends. "In the beginning all was darkness and water, and therein were generated monstrous animals of strange and peculiar form. There were men with two wings, and some even with four, and two faces; and others with two heads, a man's and a woman's, on one body; and there were men with the heads and horns of goats, and men with hoofs like horses, and some with the upper parts of a man joined to the lower parts of a horse, like centaurs; and there were bulls with human heads, dogs with four bodies and with fishes' tails, men and horses with dogs' heads, creatures with heads and bodies of horses but with tails of fish, and other animals mixing the forms of various beasts. Moreover, there were monstrous fish and reptiles and serpents,

and divers other creatures which had borrowed something from each other's shapes ; of all which the likenesses are still preserved in the temple of Belus. A woman ruled them all, by name Omorka, which is in Chaldee *Thalatth*, and in Greek *Thalassa* (or, 'the sea'). Then Belus appeared, and split the woman in twain ; and of the one half of her he made the heaven, and of the other half the earth ; and the beasts that were in her he caused to perish. And he split the darkness, and divided the heaven and the earth asunder, and put the world in order ; and the animals that could not bear the light perished. Belus upon this, seeing the earth was desolate, yet teeming with productive power, commanded one of the gods to cut off his head, and to mix the blood which flowed forth with earth, and form men therewith, and beasts that could bear the light. So man was made and was intelligent, being a partaker of the Divine wisdom. Likewise Belus made the stars, and the sun and moon, and the five planets."

708.—AN EASTERN KING RECEIVING PRESENTS.
2 Chron. ix. 1, 23, 24.

"In western Asia the sovereign usually seeks to dazzle his subjects with his glory and his wealth, and awe them by an exhibition of his power. He takes frequent occasions to display his splendour, and to amuse the people with shows. At such times he sits in state, surrounded by his chief officers, and adorned with all that can impress an Oriental. The governors and great men of his kingdom present themselves in turn, and offer him valuable gifts. It reminds one of Solomon's court, and of the visit and presents of the Queen of Sheba." Morier gives a vivid picture of such a scene. The Shah of Persia, on such an occasion, as he sat in Oriental fashion upon his elevated throne, could only be seen from the waist upward, being hid by the railing, which bore a variety of vases and toys. Two square pillars supported an imitation of peacocks, studded with precious stones of all descriptions, and holding each a ruby in its bill. On the round top of the throne was a representation of the sun with rays of diamonds. The throne was covered with plates of gold and enamel, and it was said to have cost five hundred thousand dollars. The king wore a coat of scarlet and gold, and his shoulders were covered with layers of pearls and precious stones. On each arm were three jewelled rings, or armlets, called *bazubend*, worn by royalty alone. These contain his finest jewels, one of which, the *diria nory*, is one of

the largest in the world. Round his waist he wore a band of pearls four inches broad, clasped in front, where shone an emerald of immense size. He carried a brilliant dagger in this belt, with a tassel of pearls, upon which he kept his hand, using it as a plaything. His *kalioon*, or water-pipe, blazed with precious stones. On the right of the throne stood four pages, holding respectively his crown, his shield and mace, his bow and arrows, and his sword. The crown, or tiara, was thickly inlaid with pearls, emeralds, rubies, and diamonds ; on the summit was a *gika* of precious stones, and a tuft of heron's feathers.

709.—BAAL-ZEBUB.—*2 Kings i. 2.*

Bruce, the traveller in Abyssinia, tells us that whenever the fly called *zebub* (or, in Arabic, *zinib*) appears, as it always does, in swarms, "all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger." These flies are such an annoyance, and the causes of such serious losses in the hot Eastern countries, that it was very natural for superstitious people to create a deity who presided over these flies, to whom they might pray for deliverance ; and such a deity Baal-zebub appears to have been. His name is also presented as Baal-zebul, or Lord of dung, because the injurious kinds of flies may be seen crowding over dung. The mischief wrought by flies has been illustrated in recent explorations of Central Africa. Again and again travellers have lost their cattle by the attacks of the *tsetse* fly. In the summer of 1878, a huge carcase of some animal, too disfigured to be identified, was cast up on the sands at Westward Ho, in Devonshire. Upon this carcase millions of strange and poisonous flies settled ; a lady walking on the shore was bitten in the neck by one of them, and died in much suffering after a few days. The authorities were compelled to cover the body with quicklime to abate the nuisance of the flies. Such things, acting on the minds of superstitious people, outside of revelation, might easily create a *Baal-zebub*, who would be more feared than loved.

710.—LANDS SPOILED BY SUDDEN FLOODS.—*Isaiah xviii. 2.*

Great injury has often been done to the lands contiguous to large and rapid rivers, especially when inundations have happened. Various occurrences of this nature are mentioned by different travellers, which clearly show the meaning of the prophet in these words. Sonnini relates a circumstance of this kind, of which he was a witness in passing down the Nile. He

says, “The *reis* and the sailors were asleep upon the beach ; I had passed half of the night watching, and I composed myself to sleep, after giving the watch to two of my companions, but they, too, had sunk into slumber. The *kanja*, badly fastened against the shore, broke loose, and the current carried it away with the utmost rapidity. We were all asleep ; not one of us, not even the boatmen stretched upon the sand, perceived our manner of sailing down at the mercy of the current. After having floated with the stream for a space of a good league, the boat hurried along with violence, struck with a terrible crash against the shore, precisely a little below the place from whence the greatest part of the loosened earth fell down. Awakened by this furious shock, we were not slow in perceiving the critical situation into which we were thrown. The *kanja*, repelled by the land, which was cut perpendicularly, and driven towards it again by the violence of the current, turned round in every direction, and dashed against the shore in such a manner as excited an apprehension that it would be broken to pieces. The darkness of the night, the frightful noise which the masses separated from the shore spread far and wide as they fell into deep water—the bubbling which they excited, the agitation of which communicated itself to the boat, rendered our awakening a very melancholy one. There was no time to be lost. I made my companions take the oars, which the darkness prevented us from finding so soon as we could have wished ; I sprung to the helm, and encouraging my new and very inexperienced sailors, we succeeded in making our escape from a repetition of shocks by which we must at length all have inevitably perished : for scarcely had we gained, after several efforts, the middle of the river than a piece of hardened mud, of an enormous size, tumbled down at the very spot we had just quitted, which must, had we been but a few minutes later, have carried us to the bottom.”

711.—CURIOS CUSTOM OF BATHING IN THE JORDAN.
Matt. iii. 5, 6.

In remembrance of the miraculous passage of the Israelites, and the baptism of our Lord, which is assumed to have occurred at the same spot, numbers of Syrian Christians, and also Greeks, Nestorians, and Copts, come annually to bathe, at Easter-time, in the sacred river. The description of the scene, as given by Dean Stanley, will aid in realising the crowding multitudes that gathered about John the Baptist.

"Once a year, on the Monday in Passion Week, the desolation of the plain of Jericho is broken by the descent from the Judæan hills of five, six, or eight thousand pilgrims, who are now, from all parts of the Byzantine Empire, gathered within the walls of Jerusalem. The Turkish governor is with them; an escort of Turkish soldiers accompanies them to protect them down the desert hills against the robbers, who, from the days of the good Samaritan downwards, have infested the solitary pass. On a bare space beside the entangled thickets of the modern Jericho—distinguished by the square tower, now the castle of its chief, and called by pilgrims 'the House of Zaccheus'—the vast encampment is spread out, recalling the image of the tents which Israel here first pitched by Gilgal. Two hours before dawn, the rude Eastern kettle-drum rouses the sleeping multitude. It is to move onwards to the Jordan, so as to accomplish the object before the great heat of the lower valley becomes intolerable. Over the intervening desert the wide crowd advances in almost perfect silence. Above is the bright Paschal moon; before them moves a bright flare of torches; on each side huge watch-fires break the darkness of the night, and act as beacons for the successive descents of the road. The sun breaks over the eastern hills as the head of the cavalcade reaches the brink of the Jordan. Then it is, for the first time, that the European traveller sees the sacred river, rushing through its thicket of willow, tamarisk, and agnus-castus, with rapid eddies, and of a turbid yellow colour, like the Tiber at Rome, and about as broad—sixty or eighty feet. The chief features of the scene are the white cliffs and green thickets on each bank, though at this spot they break away on the western side, so as to leave an open space for the descent of the pilgrims. Beautiful as the scene is, it is impossible not to feel a momentary disappointment at the conviction produced by the first glance, that it cannot be the spot either of the passage of Joshua or of the baptism of John. The high eastern banks preclude both events. But in a few moments the great body of pilgrims, now distinctly visible in the breaking day, appear on the ridge of the last terrace. None, or hardly any, are on foot. Horse, mule, ass, and camel, in promiscuous confusion, bearing whole families on their backs—a father, mother, and three children perhaps on a single camel—occupy the vacant spaces between and above the jungle in all directions.

"If the traveller expects a wild burst of enthusiasm, such as

that of the Greeks when they caught the first glimpse of the sea, or the German armies at the sight of the Rhine, he will be disappointed. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole pilgrimage to the Jordan, from first to last, than the absence of any such displays. Nowhere is more clearly seen that deliberative business-like aspect of their devotion, so well described in Esther, unrelieved by any expression of emotion, unless, perhaps, a slight tinge of merriment. They dismount, and set to work to perform their bathe ; most on the open space, some farther up among the thickets ; some plunging in naked, most, however, with white dresses which they bring with them, and which, having been so used, are kept for their winding-sheets. Most of the bathers keep within the shelter of the bank, where the water is about four feet in depth, though with a bottom of very deep mud. The Coptic pilgrims are curiously distinguished from the rest by the boldness with which they dart into the main current, striking the water after their fashion alternately with their two arms, and playing with the eddies which hurry them down and across, as if they were in the cataracts of the Nile ; crashing through the thick boughs of the jungle which, on the eastern bank of the stream, intercepts their progress, and then recrossing the river higher up, where they can wade, assisted by long poles which they have cut from the opposite thickets. It is remarkable, considering the mixed assemblage of men and women in such a scene, that there is so little appearance of levity or indecorum. A primitive domestic character pervades in a singular form the whole scene. The families which have come on their single mule or camel now bathe together with the utmost gravity, the father receiving from the mother the infant, which has been brought to receive the one immersion which will suffice for the rest of its life ; and thus, by a curious economy of resources, save it from the expense and danger of a future pilgrimage in after years. In about two hours the shores are cleared ; with the same quiet they remount their camels and horses, and before the noonday heat has set in, are again encamped on the upper plain of Jericho. At the dead of night the drum again wakes them for their homeward march. The torches again go before ; behind follows the vast multitude, mounted, passing in profound silence over that silent plain—so silent that, but for the tinkling of the drum, its departure would hardly be perceptible. The troops stay on the ground to the end, to guard the rear, and when the last roll of the drum announces that

the last soldier is gone, the whole plain returns to its perfect solitude."

712.—THE BITTER HERBS OF THE MODERN PASSOVER.
Exod. xii. 8.

Mr. Allen, who describes with great care modern Jewish customs, says that the bitter herbs now used are lettuce, chervil, parsley, celery, and wild succory or horseradish. The Mishna and Maimonides mention five sorts of bitter herbs, any one or all of which might be eaten. According to some Jewish writers, chicory, wild lettuce, and horehound were among the herbs that were intended to be used at the Passover; and the Jews in Egypt are said by Forskal to eat the lettuce along with the Paschal lamb.

713.—THE COLOURS OF THE TYRIAN DYES.
1 Chron. xxix. 2.

For special dyes, of "diverse colours," the Tyrians have been immemorially famous. These are referred to among the things prepared by David for the Temple which he so earnestly desired to build. The dispute as to the precise nature of these colours appears to be set at rest by the discovery of the figures of two Tyrians in the tomb of Rameses Miamun, at Thebes, arrayed in dresses which exhibit the colours in question. It may be, indeed, imagined that we may not take these colours as determining the exact shade, but as furnishing the nearest approximation which the pigments of the Egyptian artists allowed. But we should think there is little doubt they could obtain the exact colour, if they desired it, although, with regard to the blue or purple, it may be doubted whether it was of as much use for a painting as it was for a dye. The dress of these figures itself is remarkable, and is a valuable contribution to the costumes of the region to which Palestine belongs. The colours are purple and scarlet, and are so arranged that one half the person is clothed with the one, and the other half with the other. Both colours are extremely vivid, as the Greek and Latin writers represent them to have been. The scarlet part of the outer short mantle or cape has a pattern of large purple spots upon it, which appear to have been formed during the process of dyeing, either by sewing on patches of cloth of the shape of the spots, or by applying more earthy ground to protect the purple in these places from the reagent which turned the rest scarlet. The mantle

and tunic are both edged with a deep gold lace ; and the whole forms a gorgeous dress, agreeing well with the refinement and luxury which ancient writers ascribe to the Tyrians, and which are so vividly described by the prophet Ezekiel—chap. xxvii. On comparing the colours with those given in Syme's edition of *Werner's Nomenclature of Colours*, we find the blue or purple to have a close resemblance to China blue, or perhaps a shade lighter, between that and azure blue. The red is a distinct scarlet red, deepening into vermillion. As far as appears, the only use of these colours in connection with Solomon's temple was in the veils or curtains which covered the doors of entrance to the outer and inner sanctuary (2 Chron. iii. 14). The material of these veils was dyed of these colours, and they were decorated with figures of cherubim, probably wrought in needlework.—*Kitto*.

714.—SOLOMON'S ASCENT TO THE TEMPLE.—*1 Kings x. 5.*

The palace of King Solomon was built on Mount Zion, while the Temple stood on the summit of Moriah. Between these two hills was a deep valley or ravine. Recent research has brought to light the remains of a colossal bridge which spanned this ravine, and connected the palace and the temple. It must have been one of the most splendid architectural works in the Holy City. The masonry is unquestionably Jewish, but of what period of Jewish rule cannot be yet said to have been fully ascertained. One of the stones in the fragment of the arch still remaining measures twenty-four feet in length, and another twenty. Calculating by the curve of the arch, and the distance from the Temple wall to the rocky side of Mount Zion opposite, the bridge when complete would seem to have been composed of five arches, each about forty-one feet in span ; and its elevation above the bottom of the ravine could scarcely have been less than a hundred feet. The first definite mention of this bridge is in connection with the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey, twenty years before Herod ascended the throne. It was not, therefore, a work of Herod. It was built long before his day. There are no data, however, by which to connect it with the “ascent” of Solomon. The Hebrew word is correctly rendered “ascent,” and it may either be by stairs or otherwise. The same ascent is apparently referred to in 1 Chron. xxvi. 16 : “To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, at the gate Shallecheth, *by the causeway of the going up.*” The word translated “causeway”

means a viaduct of any kind, and then a staircase. Would it not strike one, on reading the whole narratives, that some very remarkable approach to the Temple is referred to by the sacred writers ; and that it was in some way appropriated to the use of the king ? If such a bridge as that whose ruins are now seen existed in Solomon's day, it would unquestionably make a profound impression on the mind of the Queen of Sheba.—*Porter.*

715.—PAUL'S EDUCATION AT TARSUS.—*Acts xxii. 3.*

Of this we have only grounds for conjecture more or less reasonable. His education was probably conducted at home rather than at school, for, although Tarsus was celebrated for its learning, so intense Jews as his parents would not readily expose their son to the influence of Gentile teaching. Or, if he went to a school, it was not a Greek school, but rather one held in some room connected with the synagogue, where a noisy class of Jewish children received the rudiments of instruction, seated on the ground with their teacher, after the manner of Mohammedian children in the East, who may be seen or heard at their lessons near the mosque. At such a school, it may be, he learnt to read and to write, going and returning under the care of some attendant, according to that custom which he afterwards used as an illustration in the Epistle to the Galatians when he spoke of the Law as the slave who conducts us to the school of Christ. His religious knowledge, as years advanced, was obtained from hearing the Law read in the synagogue, from listening to the arguments and discussions of learned doctors, and from that habit of questioning and answering, which was permitted even to the children among the Jews. The educational maxim of the Jews at a later period was : “At five years of age, let children begin the Scripture ; at ten, the Mishna ; at thirteen, let them be subjects of the Law.”

716.—THE SANHEDRIM IN THE TIME OF OUR LORD. *Mark xv. 1.*

With the help of Canon Farrar, the following information on the subject of the great Jewish Council has been collected :—

The Sanhedrim was the successor of the Great Synagogue, the last member of which died in the person of Simon the Just. In the Mishna a mention is made of two kinds of

Sanhedrim—the provincial, of five or seven members ; and the Grand Sanhedrim, of seventy-one, with their two great officials, the Nasî, and Ab Beth Din. The first Nasî under Hyrcanus II. is said to have been Joshua Ben Perachiah, and the first Ab Beth Din, Nitai of Arbela. It is said that in the Temple sat three Sanhedrims, or as we should perhaps call two of them, “Committees of the Sanhedrim,” of twenty-three members each ; the Great Sanhedrim of seventy-one met in the Lishcat Haggazith ; another, or a Committee of the same, in a chamber which abutted on the Chil, or division between the Court of the Gentiles and of the women ; and a third at the gate of the Har ha-Beit, or Temple mountain. Derenbourg conjectures, with some probability, that the Great Sanhedrim was but the reunion of the three inferior ones of twenty-three, together with the two presiding officers, and that these three Committees were composed—1. Of priests ; 2. Of levites ; 3. Of notables.

The Sanhedrim which condemned our Lord was a dubious and hybrid kind of assembly. When the Sanhedrim had unanimously rejected the claim of Herod, on the authority of Deut. xvii. 15, the Talmud says that he exterminated them all except Babha Ben Buta, whose eyes he put out ; and that the rebuilding of the Temple was undertaken by the advice of the survivor, in expiation of the atrocity. Whatever the exact circumstances may have been, Herod, after the execution of Antigonus, seems to have inflicted on the Sanhedrim a frightful vengeance, from which it took them a long time to recover. It was soon after this that he thrust into the high priesthood creatures of his own, of Egyptian and Babylonian origin, such as Simon and Joazar, the Boëthusians from Alexandria, and a certain obscure Hananel, of Babylon, who may possibly be identical with the Annas of Scripture. For a time at least the real Sanhedrim seems to have been suspended, and its functions usurped by an assemblage of Herod's own adherents. The dignity of sacerdotalism might give to this spurious assemblage an appearance of dignity, but it is probable that the Pharisees (*i.e.*, the leading doctors of the party) took little, if any, part either in its deliberations or its proceedings. They left it to the obscure Beni Bethyra, the Boëthusians, the Hananites, the Kantheras, the Kamhiths, the Phabis, and their adherents. The meetings of the Sanhedrim of which Josephus speaks during this period were arbitrary, incompetent, and special gatherings.

717.—WOMEN AT EASTERN WELLS.—*Exod.* ii. 16.

“We arrived at (a) well . . . at midnight, (in) a mountainous place, where the water was good enough to drink. We were agreeably surprised to find the well, but much more so when we saw a few sheep round it. There never was a more welcome sight. . . . We proposed to purchase one, and eat it as soon as it should be half cooked. We approached, but the guardian of the flock beat a forced march into the mountain, and drove the intended repast away from us. We began to think we could not continue to be deprived of what we could purchase, and sent some of our drivers to follow the flock, which they hastily did, as they were not less hungry than ourselves. . . . We reached the flock, and found that its guardians were two beautiful damsels of the desert. . . . Those poor girls had no other way to show themselves but at the well: that is the only place they have a chance to see or be seen. At last we purchased the sheep, and devoured it; the nymphs watered their flocks, filled their skins, and set off at daylight.”—*Belzoni.*

718.—HIEROGLYPHICAL WRITING.—*Deut.* x. 2.

“The word *hieroglyphic* is made up of the Greek terms, *hieros*, sacred, and *glypho*, to carve or engrave; and it properly means *sacred carvings*. It was applied by the Greeks to that species of writing which they found engraved or sculptured upon the Egyptian monuments. They probably regard these as specially employed to denote sacred things, but it has been abundantly proved that they constituted a real written language, in which common events of history, as well as matters of religion and mythology, were described. Picture writing was one of the earliest modes of communication between men. They evidently painted figures of things before they acquired the art of describing them in written language; and the forms that letters assumed subsequently are due to the original figures, of which they are abbreviations. It is said that when the Spaniards first landed on the shores of South America, their arrival was announced to the inhabitants of the interior by rude paintings of men, arms, and ships. Egypt is perhaps the only country whose monuments present to us the successive steps by which men have arrived at alphabetic writing, the first and simplest part of the process being the use of hieroglyphics, which would be gradually changed to mere outlines; then only the essential and dis-

tinctive parts would be preserved, and corners would be rounded off, until at last but little trace of the original figures could be discovered. The Hebrew letters retain some curious traces of the pictures, or figures, of which they are evidently the reduced forms.

“The hieroglyphical writing is of three kinds, the phonetic, the symbolic, and the pictorial. The names of the Egyptian gods were usually expressed by symbols, not by letters. These representations were of two kinds; figurative, in which the name of the deity is implied, by the form in which he was represented in his statue; and symbolic, in which a part of the statue, or some object having a reference to the deity, was employed.”

719.—HIRAM THE ARTIST.—*1 Kings vii. 13 ; 2 Chron. ii. 14.*

In the two accounts of the pedigree of this man there appears to be a contradiction. That given in Kings represents him to be a “widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali.” That given in Chronicles describes him as “the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan.” It is not, however, difficult to give a satisfactory explanation. A section of the tribe of Dan seized upon and colonised a portion of the old Sidonian territory on the north-eastern border of Naphtali. One of the daughters of Dan probably married a man of the neighbouring tribe of Naphtali, was left a widow, and then took for her second husband a Tyrian. Hiram was the fruit of the latter marriage; and his mother was both a “woman of the daughters of Dan,” and “a widow of Naphtali.”

720.—ASCENSION DAY.—*Acts i. 9.*

A festival in commemoration of our Lord’s ascension was held by the early Church on the fortieth day after Easter-day. But no definite mention of it occurs before the fourth century. *Epiphanius* (4th century) complains that the greatness of this festival is not duly appreciated, though it is to the others what the head is to the body, the crown and completion. First, he says, is the Feast of Incarnation; second, the Theophania; third, the Passion and Resurrection. “But even this festival brought not the fulness of joy, because it still left the risen Lord fettered to this earth. The Pentecost, also, on which the Holy Ghost was communicated, contains a great, unspeakable joy. But to-day, the day of the Ascension, all is filled with joy supreme.” Chrysostom intimates that the celebration was held by an extra-mural procession, but this may not

have been a general custom : it seems more probable that it was local and special, done in honour of the martyrs, whose remains the bishop Flavian had rescued from impure contact, and translated to the martyrium called Romanesia, outside the walls of Antioch. In Jerusalem, Bede tells us that the celebration was almost as sacred as the Easter celebration, and a procession went to Mount Olivet, on which the Empress Helena had erected a church. It began at midnight, and, with the multitude of tapers and torches, the mountain and the subjacent landscape were all ablaze. Elsewhere the procession was to the nearest hill or rising ground, from which, at the same time, a benediction was pronounced on the fields and fruits of the earth. Gregory of Tours speaks of the solemn processions with which Ascension Day was everywhere celebrated ; but perhaps he means only processions to the churches. Martene describes one such as held at Vienne, in France. The Archbishop, with deacon and subdeacon, headed it : on their return to the church, they are received by all standing in the nave ; two canons advance towards the cantors : after mutual responses all proceed into the choir, and mass is celebrated. There was also on this day, in some churches, a service of benediction over loaves provided for the poor, and also over the new fruits of the earth.

721.—CHRIST'S BLOODY SWEAT.—*Luke xxii. 44.*

There are some who only suppose that by this phraseology the mere size of the drops of perspiration is indicated. But the plain meaning of the language is that the sweat was bloody in its nature ; that the physical nature of our Lord was so deranged by the violent pressure of mental agony that blood oozed from every pore. Such a result is not uncommon in a sensitive constitution. The face reddens with blood both from shame and anger. Were this continued with intensity, the blood would force its way through the smaller vessels, and exude from the skin.

Kannegiesser remarks, “If the mind is seized with a sudden fear of death, the sweat, owing to the excessive degree of constriction, often becomes bloody.” The eminent French historian, De Thou, mentions the case of an Italian officer who commanded at Monte-Maro, a fortress of Piedmont, during the warfare in 1552 between Henry II. of France and the Emperor Charles V. The officer, having been treacherously seized by order of the hostile general, and threatened with

public execution unless he surrendered the place, was so agitated at the prospect of an ignominious death that he sweated blood from every part of his body. The same writer relates a similar occurrence in the person of a young Florentine at Rome, unjustly put to death by order of Pope Sixtus V., in the beginning of his reign, and concludes the narrative as follows :—“When the youth was led forth to execution, he excited the commiseration of many, and, through excess of grief, was observed to shed bloody tears, and to discharge blood instead of sweat from his whole body.”

Medical experience does so far corroborate the testimony of the Gospels, and shows that cutaneous haemorrhage is sometimes the result of intense mental agitation. The awful anguish of Him who said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” was sufficient cause to produce the bloody perspiration on a cold night and in the open air.—*Eadie.*

722.—MOHAMMEDAN LEGENDS OF JESUS.—*Matt. xix. 23.*

Only a few supposed sayings of Christ are found in the Koran, and the most interesting of them are the two following :—

“Jesus the son of Mary said, ‘He who longs to be rich is like a man who drinks sea-water; the more he drinks the more thirsty he becomes, and never leaves off drinking till he perishes.’”

“Jesus once said, ‘The world is like a deceitful woman, who, when asked how many husbands she had had answered, so many that she could not count them.’ And Jesus said, ‘When they died, did they leave you behind?’ ‘On the contrary,’ said she, ‘I murdered and got rid of them.’ ‘Then,’ said Jesus, ‘It is strange that the rest had so little wisdom, that when they saw how you treated the others, they still burned with such love for you, and did not take warning from their predecessors.’”

723.—THE TRIUMPH OF JAPHET.—*Gen. ix. 27.*

The prophecy of Noah has been remarkably fulfilled within the comparatively narrow area of that region which stretches from beyond Jordan to the shores of the Levant. For eight hundred years—so we are informed by the sacred records—the sons of Ham, through Canaan, increased and multiplied in this favourable region, founded mighty cities, accumulated great wealth, and subdivided their inheritance among different tribes and kingdoms of a common descent. At length, how-

ever, the descendants of Shem, through Eber, accomplished their destiny. The promised land became their possession, the remnant of the degraded Canaanites their bond-servants. For eleven hundred years it became the theatre on which was displayed the triumphs of David, the glories of Solomon, the vicissitudes of the divided nationalities of Judah and Israel, and the sublimest of all events, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the consequent redemption of the world. Then came another displacement ; the Hebrew race was driven forth from the land, and for eighteen hundred years it was alternately occupied and lost by Roman and Saracen, by Turk and Arab, until now it has become once more the heritage of the Canaanite, as an appanage of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, as Prof. D. Wilson has well remarked, the sceptre of that little realm has passed from nation to nation, through the historical representatives of all the great primary divisions of the human family, and a record of its ethnological changes would constitute an epitome of the natural history of man.—*Macmillan.*

724.—CHARMING OF SERPENTS.—*Psalm lviii. 4, 5.*

M. Chateaubriand gives the following interesting description :—“One day a rattlesnake entered our encampment. Among us was a Canadian who could play the flute, and who, to divert us, marched against the serpent with his new species of weapon. On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curls himself into a spiral line, flattens his head, inflates his cheeks, contracts his lips, displays his envenomed fangs and his bold throat ; his tongue flows like two flames of fire ; his eyes are burning coals ; his body, swollen with rage, rises and falls like the bellows of a forge ; his dilated skin assumes a dull and scaly appearance ; and his tail, whence proceeds the death-announcing sound, vibrates with such rapidity as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian begins to play upon his flute ; the serpent starts with surprise, and draws back his head. In proportion as he is struck with the magic notes, his eyes lose their fierceness ; the oscillations of his tail become slower, and the sounds which it makes become weaker, and gradually die away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the charmed serpent are by degrees expanded, and sink one after another on the ground in concentric circles. The shades of azure green, white, and gold, recover their brightness on his quivering skin, and, slightly turning his head, he remains motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian

advances a few steps, producing with the flute sweet and simple notes. The serpent, inclining his variegated neck, opens a passage with his head through the high grass, and begins to creep after the musician ; stopping when he stops, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he advances forward. In this manner he was led out of the camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, which had witnessed this effect of harmony."

725.—PECULIARITIES OF MOUNTAIN GRASSES.—*Ps. cxlvii. 8.*

The following beautiful and instructive passage is taken from Rev. Hugh Macmillan's *Bible Teachings in Nature*, a work of singular suggestiveness and value to Scripture students :—“The mountain grasses grow spontaneously ; they require no culture but such as the rain and the sunshine of heaven supply. They obtain their nourishment directly from the inorganic soil, and are independent of organic materials. Nowhere is the grass so green and vigorous as on the beautiful slopes of lawn-like pasture high up on the Alps, radiant with the glory of wild flowers, and ever musical with the hum of grasshoppers and the tinkling of cattle-bells. Innumerable cows and goats browse upon them ; the peasants spend the summer months in making cheese and hay from them for winter consumption in the valleys. This exhausting system of husbandry has been carried on during untold centuries ; no one thinks of manuring the Alpine pastures ; and yet no deficiency has been observed in their fertility, though the soil is but a thin covering spread over the naked rocks. It may be regarded as a part of the same wise and gracious arrangement of Providence, that the insects which devour the grasses on the Kuh and Schaf Alpen, the pasturages of the cows and sheep, are kept in check by a predominance of carnivorous insects. In all the mountain meadows, it has been ascertained that the species of carnivorous are at least four times as numerous as the species of herb-eating insects. Thus, in the absence of birds, which are rare in Switzerland, the pastures are preserved from a terrible scourge. To one not aware of this check, it may seem surprising how the verdure of the Alpine pastures should be so rich and luxuriant considering the immense development of insect life. The grass, whenever the sun shines, is literally swarming with them—butterflies of gayest hues, and beetles of brightest iridescence ; and the air is filled with their loud murmurs. I remember well the vivid feeling of God's gracious providence

which possessed me when passing over the Wengern Alp, at the foot of the Jungfrau, and seeing, wherever I rested on the green turf, the balance of nature so wonderfully preserved between the herb which is for man's food, and the moth before which he is crushed. Were the herbivorous insects allowed to multiply to their full extent, in such favourable circumstances as the warmth of the air and the verdure of the earth in Switzerland produce, the rich pastures which now yield abundant food for upwards of a million and a half of cattle would speedily become bare and leafless deserts. Not only in their power of growing without cultivation, but also in the peculiarities of their structure, the mountain grasses proclaim the hand of God. Many of them are viviparous. Instead of producing flowers and seed, as the grasses in the tranquil valleys do, the young plants spring from them perfectly formed. They cling round the stem and form a kind of blossom. In this state they remain until the parent stalk withers and falls prostrate on the ground, when they immediately strike root and form independent grasses. This is a remarkable adaptation to circumstances; for it is manifest that were seeds instead of living plants developed in the ears of the mountain-grasses, they would be useless in the stormy regions where they grow. They would be blown away far from the places they were intended to clothe, to spots foreign to their nature and habits, and thus the species would speedily perish."

726.—ANCIENT GRACES BEFORE MEALS.—*Matt. xiv. 19.*

From the earliest times our Lord's act has been taken as a model, and the Jewish custom, being reconfirmed by our Lord's example, has passed into the practice of Christian people. Examples remain of the early graces, as used both in the Eastern and Western Churches, which cannot fail to interest our readers.

The "Apostolical Constitutions" furnish the following as a *prayer at a mid-day meal*:—"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who feedest me from my youth up, who givest food to all flesh. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness; that, always having a sufficiency, we may abound unto every good work, in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom be glory and honour, and power unto Thee, world without end, Amen." This prayer, slightly varied, is also given to be said after meals in a treatise improbably ascribed to St. Athanasius. After describing it, the author proceeds:—"And when thou art seated at table, and hast begun to break the bread, having

thrice sealed it with the sign of the cross, thus give thanks : ‘ We give thanks unto Thee, our Father, for Thy holy resurrection ; for through Thy Son Jesus Christ hast Thou made it known unto us ; and as this bread upon this table was in separate grains, and being gathered together became one thing, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom ; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.’ And this prayer thou oughtest to say when thou breakest bread and desirest to eat ; but when thou dost set it on the table, and sittest down, say *Our Father*, all through. But the prayer above, ‘ Blessed art Thou,’ etc., we say after we have made our meal and have risen from the table.”

The following are the most ancient graces of the Latin Church now extant :—*Prayers before Meat.*—1. “ Refresh us, O Lord, with Thy gifts, and sustain us with the bounty of Thy riches ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” 2. “ Let us be refreshed, O Lord, from Thy grants and gifts, and satisfied with Thy blessing, through,” etc. 3. “ Protect us, O Lord our God, and afford needful sustenance to our faith, through,” etc. 4. “ Bless, O Lord, Thy gifts, which of Thy bounty we are about to take, through,” etc. 5. “ O God, who dost alway invite us to spiritual delights, give a blessing on thy gifts ; that we may attain to a sanctified reception of those things which are to be eaten in Thy name, through,” etc. 6. “ May Thy gifts, O Lord, refresh us, and Thy grace console us, through,” etc. *Prayers after Meals.*—1. “ Satisfied, O Lord, with the gifts of Thy riches, we give Thee thanks for these things which we receive from Thy bounty, beseeching Thy mercy that that which was needful for our bodies may not be burdensome to our minds, through,” etc. 2. “ We have been satisfied, O Lord, with Thy grants and gifts. Replenish us with Thy mercy, Thou who art blessed, who, with the Father and Holy Ghost livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.”—*Dicit. Christ. Antiq.*

727.—THE INSULT OF CUTTING A MAN’S PROPERTY. *2 Sam. x. 4.*

To cut anything belonging to a Samoan is one of the greatest insults that can be offered to him. If he sees the marks of a knife or a hatchet on his canoe or bread-fruit tree, or on a few rare plants, he considers that is like cutting himself, and rages like a bear to find out who has done it. A whole settlement will rise and carry war into another place,

to avenge the insult occasioned by malicious cuttings. If it is a *blunt* injury from a stick or stone, they do not mind it so much ; but to them there is a terrible meaning in the marks of any sharp instrument.—*Turner's "Polynesia."*

728.—LUTHER'S IDEAS ABOUT DEVILS.—*1 Tim.* iv. 1.

It is very singular that, even while fighting superstition, the great Luther should have been himself so superstitious. He had a most vivid belief in the devil, and in devils. He tells us that a Christian ought to know that he lives in the midst of such, and that the devil is nearer to him than his coat or his shirt. The devils are all around us, and are at every moment seeking to ensnare our lives, salvation, and happiness. There are many of them in the woods, waters, deserts, and in damp, muddy places, for the purpose of doing folk a mischief. They also house in the dense black clouds, and send storms, hail, thunder, and lightning, and poison the air with an infernal stench. In one place, Luther tells us that the devil has more vessels and boxes full of poison, with which he kills people, than all the apothecaries in the whole world. He sends all plagues and diseases among men. We may be sure that when any one dies of the pestilence, is drowned, or drops suddenly dead, the devil does it.—*Conway.*

It is humbling and instructive thus to observe how much superstitious feeling has added to the Scripture “doctrine of devils.”

729.—GITTITH.—*Heading of Psalm viii. etc.*

This heading, *al hag-gittith*, is found to Psalms viii., lxxxi., and lxxxiv. Some, perhaps the majority of commentators, take it to be the name of a musical instrument, and render “upon the gittith.” The Targums suppose it to be some kind of harp which David brought from Gath-Rimmon of the Philistines ; while others are of opinion that it is an instrument constructed after the form of a wine-press. Others suppose the title to refer to the subject matter of the Psalms with which it is connected, and think the title implies that these Psalms referred to circumstances which occurred to David at Gath : but if this were the case it would be natural to find the heading to Psalms xxxiv. and lvi. Others suppose that these Psalms were to be sung at the grape-treading festivities ; for we know that the custom of singing and shouting for joy on such occasions was prevalent among the Hebrews. This interpretation has the authority of the Septuagint version, but does not seem particularly appropriate to Psalms viii. and lxxxiv.

730.—FONDNESS FOR POTTAGE.—*Gen. xxv. 30.*

The people of the East are exceedingly fond of pottage, which they call *kool*. It is something like gruel, and is made of various kinds of grain, which are first beaten in a mortar. The red pottage is made of *kurakan*, and other grains, but is not superior to the other. For such a contemptible mess, then, did Esau sell his birthright.

When a man has sold his fields or gardens for an insignificant sum, the people say, “The fellow has sold his land for pottage.” Does a father give his daughter in marriage to a low-caste man, it is observed, “He has given her for pottage.” Does a person by base means seek for some paltry enjoyment, it is said “For one leaf” (namely, leaf-full) “of pottage he will do nine days’ work.” Has a learned man who has given instruction or advice to others stooped to anything which was not expected from him, it is said, “The learned one has fallen into the pottage pot.” “The lizard which gave warning to the people has fallen into the pottage pot.” Of a man in great poverty, it is remarked, “Alas! he cannot get pottage.” A beggar asks, “Sir, will you give me a little pottage?” Does a man seek to acquire great things by small means, “He is trying to procure rubies by pottage.” When a person greatly flatters another, it is common to say, “He praises him only for his pottage.” Does a king greatly oppress his subjects, it is said, “He only governs for the pottage.” Has an individual lost much money by trade, “The speculation has broken his pottage pot.” Does a rich man threaten to ruin a poor man, the latter will ask, “Will the lightning strike my pottage pot?”

—*Roberts's "Oriental Illustrations."*

731.—WIND BLOWING WHERE IT LISTETH.—*John iii. 8.*

A beautiful similarity to this striking figure of our Lord's is found in one of the Vedic hymns of ancient India. It is addressed to *Vata*, or *Vayu*, the Wind-God.

“I celebrate the glory of *Vata*'s chariot: its noise comes rending and resounding. Touching the sky he moves onward, making all things ruddy; and he comes propelling the dust of the earth.”

“Soul of the gods, source of the universe, this deity moves as he lists. His sounds have been heard, but his form is not seen; this *Vata* let us worship with an oblation!”

732.—MODERN JOPPA.—*Joshua xix. 46.*

Mr. W. Hepworth Dixon writes:—“Jaffa (ancient Joppa) is the genuine East; a town in which all that is dark and bright in the Syrian genius seems to have met.

“It is not only that here, in Jaffa, the churches are mosques, the pumps are fountains, the streets are tunnels, the men are brown, and the women veiled; for all these forms and signs, which belong to a comparatively rainless zone, may be found from Cairo on the Nile to Beyrouth on the sea. Jaffa is a city of ancient type. Though the oldest houses are not more ancient than those of Soho-square, yet, unlike cities which have been made the toys of kings, it has undergone no change since the remotest times. Destroyed in war, rebuilt in peace, it has remained the same in aspect and in site—in the days of Solomon and Pompey, of Saladin and Napoleon, of Mohammed Ali and Abdul Aziz—a town on a hill, on a cape jutting out into the waves; built up like a cone, house rising upon house to a central peak; having a bad roadstead in its front, and a magnificent orange grove in its rear. Though Jaffa is the chief town of the rich district, it has no streets, no sewers, no markets, no shops. Though it has always been the sea-gate of Jerusalem, it has no docks, no quays, no jetties, no landing-stairs, no lights. No road leads into it, not even by the open ways of the sea. A steamer may now and then stand off the town a mile or more from the rocks; but she will only come thus near when the winds are low and the waters calm. A puff of storm from the west or south warns the sailor away from this perilous coast, and for week after week of bad weather the place is cut off from communication with the world. The open sea is not open to Jaffa. On the land side, fields creep close to the walls, and sand drifts in at the gates. Beyond the line of wall spreads the great plain; a film of creamy pink sand lying on a bed of black loam, here and there dotted by Bedaween tents and by ruined towns once bright in song and story, though they have passed away, leaving little behind them on the plain except mounds and graves.

“Leaning on the roof-screen of a house, having the hills in front, the sea behind, you may range over the fields of Lydda, a town in which St. Peter healed Eneas, in which St. George was born, and about which Lion-heart pitched his tents. To the south stands Ramleh in the sands, with its great cistern, its famous convent, and its beautiful tower of the White Mosque. Beyond Ramleh, at the mountain base, and out of ken, stands

the hill of Modin, the princely seat of Simon Maccabeus. Still more to the south, among the drifts and dunes, spring the minarets of Gaza and Ashdod, and near these living cities crouch the ruins of that Askelon in which Herod the Great was born. In the rear of these places, through the region in which Samson caught the foxes, and David fought with the giant, corn-lands and pastures roll with a waving undulation to the mountain chain.

“Falling back on the space round Jaffa, you perceive that not a house clings fondly to the rampart, not a flight of steps weds the country with the town. Through a single gateway which is barred at night, the great tides of landward life and commerce have to ebb and flow. A ditch, a market, a few wells and graves, lie beyond this portal, making an Oriental suburb; in the daytime busy with crowds and gay with colours; but from sundown to sunrise a place of ghosts, untenanted save by ravening vultures and more savage dogs. In a white field, fenced round by brambles and prickly pears, lie the ashes of a hundred generations of men—Philistines, Hebrews, Macedonians, Saracens, Franks, and Turks.

“As a city, Mohammedan Jaffa is hot, sad, silent, and forlorn. The crow of a child, the snarl of a cur, the coo of a bird, the song of a muezzin calling on the faithful to come and pray, will sometimes startle and charm your ear; the quick gleam of a lance, the plumage of a bird, the white veil of a lady may enchant your eye. In the evening, when the fresh dew is on the leaves, and the wind breathes softly through the groves, your nostril may be visited by a rare delight, caught up from myrtles, oranges and limes.”

733.—UNIVERSAL TASTE FOR PILGRIMAGES.—*Heb. xi. 13.*

The taste for pilgrimages which, at all periods of the world's history, has manifested itself in religious people, is a thing worthy of earnest attention. The worship of the true God led the Jews, several times a year, to Jerusalem. In profane antiquity, those who took any heed to religious belief at all repaired to Egypt, in order to be initiated in the mysteries of Osiris, and to seek lessons of wisdom from his priests. It was to travellers that the mysterious Sphinx of Mount Phœcœus proposed the profound enigma of which Oedipus discovered the solution. In the middle ages the spirit of pilgrimage held predominant sway in Europe, and the Christians of that epoch were full of fervour for this species of devotion. The Turks,

while they were yet believers, repaired to Mecca in great caravans : and Abbé Huc says, "In our travels in Central Asia, we constantly met numerous pilgrims going to and fro, all of them profoundly filled with, and earnestly impelled by, a sincere sentiment of religion." The Abbé gives an explanation of this universal practice of going pilgrimages that is at least curious. He says, "It is to be remarked that pilgrimages have diminished in Europe in proportion as faith has become rationalist, and as people have taken to discuss the truths of religion. Wherever faith remains earnest, simple, unquestioning in the breasts of men, these pilgrimages are in vigour. The reason is that the intensity of simple faith creates a peculiarly profound and energetic feeling of the condition of man as a wayfarer upon the earth ; and it is natural that this feeling should manifest itself in pious wayfarings." Such an explanation is certainly not *exhaustive*.

734.—SPOTS ON WORSHIPPERS.—*Deut.* xxxii. 5.

"There may be here an allusion to the marks which the worshippers of particular idols had on different parts of their bodies, particularly on their foreheads. The different sects of idolaters in the East are distinguished by their sectarian marks—the *stigma* of their respective idols. These sectarian marks, particularly on their foreheads, amount to nearly one hundred among the Hindoos, and especially among the two sects, the worshippers of Seeva and Vishnoo. In many places they are renewed daily ; for they account it irreligious to perform any sacred rite to their god without his mark on their forehead. The marks are generally horizontal and perpendicular lines, crescents, circles, leaves, eyes, etc., in red, black, white and yellow.

"The Hindoos every morning perform their ablutions in the sacred lakes, and offer a sacrifice under the solemn grove. After having gone through their religious ceremonies, they are sealed by the officiating Brahmin with the mark either of Vishnoo or Seeva, the followers of whom respectively form the two great sects among the Hindoos. The mark is impressed on the forehead with a composition of sandal-wood dust and oil, or the ashes of cowdung and turmeric. This is a holy ceremony, which has been adopted in all ages by the Eastern nations, however differing in religious profession."—*Forbes's "Oriental Memoirs."*

735.—CHERUBIC SYMBOLS OF THE GOSPELS.—*Ezek.* i. 10,
x. 20, 21.

“ These symbols remained mysterious, uninterpreted, unnoticed, until the visions of the Apocalypse, in which St. John brought together things new and old from all previous Apocalypses. . . . It was natural that this reproduction of the symbolic imagery should attract the attention of Christian writers, and equally natural that they should endeavour to find a meaning for it that came within the horizon of their own associations. And when the Church found itself in possession of the four Gospels, and of those alone, as recognised authentic records of the life and teaching of its Lord, when men were finding in them a mystic correspondence with the four elements, and the four winds, and the four rivers of Paradise, it was natural that the number of the living creatures also should seem to them to have been intended to answer to that of the four precious and sacred books. It is significant, however, of the somewhat arbitrary character of the symbolism that its application has not been uniform. The earlier writers, beginning with Irenæus, assign the lion, as the emblem of kingly majesty, to St. John; the calf, as signifying sacrificial or priestly attributes, to St. Luke; the man, as representing the humanity of Christ, to St. Matthew; the eagle, as answering to the prophetic announcement with which his Gospel opens, to St. Mark; and this is reproduced by Juvencus, a Latin poet, *cire.* A.D. 334. The pseudo-Athanasius assigns the man to St. Matthew, the calf to St. Mark, the lion to St. Luke, the eagle to St. John, but without assigning reasons. In Sedulius, a Latin poet of the fifth century, what has since been the received distribution of the symbols made its first appearance. It was quickly accepted, as having a greater measure of fitness than the earlier interpretations, was adopted by Augustine and Jerome, appears in the early mosaics of the basilicas at Rome and Ravenna, and has since been current, to the entire exclusion of the earlier view. It finds, perhaps, its noblest expression in the Latin hymn of Adam of St. Victor, in the twelfth century. Of it the following is a translation. The whole hymn may be found in Archbishop Trench’s *Latin Poetry*, p. 67.”—*Bp. Ellicott.*

See, far above the starry height,
Beholding, with unclouded sight,
 The brightness of the sun,
John doth, as eagle swift, appear,
Still gazing on the vision clear
 Of Christ, the Eternal Son.

To Mark belongs the lion's form,
 With voice loud-roaring as the storm,
 His risen Lord to own ;
 Called by the Father from the grave,
 As victor crowned, and strong to save,
 We see Him on His throne.

The face of man is Matthew's share,
 Who shows the Son of Man doth bear
 Man's form with might Divine,
 And tracks the line of high descent,
 Through which the Word with flesh was blent,
 In David's kingly line.

To Luke belongs the ox, for he,
 More clearly than the rest, doth see
 Christ as the victim slain ;
 Upon the cross, as altar true,
 The bleeding, spotless Lamb we view,
 And see all else is vain.

So from their source in Paradise
 The four mysterious rivers rise,
 And life to earth is given.
 On these four wheels and staves, behold,
 God and His ark are onward rolled,
 High above earth in heaven.

736.—PRECIOUS THINGS THRUST FORTH BY THE MOON.
Deut. xxxiii. 14.

Of the precious things thrust forth by the moon may be noticed the night-blowing flowers of all countries, the delicious scent of which is most agreeable. It has been remarked that, on account of the fragrance of these and other flowers, which in the clear moonlight and dewy nights fill the air for miles with their perfume, it is most delightful to pass through the woods of North America at a late hour; and the same may be said of night travelling in tropical countries. Of the many plants which bloom under the influence of the moon may be mentioned one more particularly; a creeping plant of great beauty and fragrance, well known in the East under the name of "the moon creeper." Its large, convolvulus-shaped flowers are of a yellowish white, and its leaves of a dark green hue. Under the sun's warm and powerful rays, these flowers are faded, drooping, and entirely closed, but in the moonlight they expand their petals, and flourish in the greatest luxuriance, elegance, and perfection, covering the lattices with a sheet of white blossoms, and filling the air with their grateful odour. The moonlight flowers appear to be mostly of a white or palish colour, and their scent, though sweet and very powerful,

seems wanting in the freshness which characterises those of the day. So rapid is the growth of plants in the clear moon-light nights, when the dew is plentifully deposited, that one shoot of the moon-flower creeper was found to have grown two inches in a single night. The moon is known to exercise an influence on all vegetation, and especially so from the new to the full moon. In olden time seeds were put in the ground at the wane of the moon, that they, according to an old rhyme, might with the planet “rest and rise.”—C. W.

737.—THE SCAPE-GOAT FOR AZAZEL.—*Lev. xvi. 8, marg.*

The meaning and associations of the word Azazel are so difficult to trace, and so uncertain, that consideration may be given to every suggestion concerning it, however unlikely and far-fetched such suggestions may, at first sight, appear to be. It has been said that Azazel, meaning *strong against God*, is the name for the demon of the desert. Gesenius and Ewald regard Azazel as a demon belonging to the pre-Mosaic religion; but it may be that the four arch-demons mentioned by the Rabbins—Samaël, Azazel, Asaël, and Maccathiel—are personifications of the elements as energies of the deity. Samaël would appear to mean the “left hand of God;” Azazel, His strength; Asaël, His reproductive force; and Maccathiel, His retributive power.

“Although Azazel is now one of the Mussulman names for a devil, it would appear to be nearly related to Al Uzza of the Koran, one of the goddesses of whom the significant tradition exists, that once when Mohammed had read, from the Sura called ‘the star,’ the question, ‘What think ye of Allat, Al Uzza, and Manah, that other third goddess?’ He himself added, ‘These are the most high and beauteous damsels, whose intercession is to be hoped for;’ the response being afterwards attributed to a *suggestion of Satan.*”

If the idea of Azazel as a demon be entertained, it is curious to observe the offering of the same kind of animal to two antagonistic deities. But it appears that in Egyptian mythology the goat had also this twofold consecration. It was sacred to Chem, the Egyptian Pan, god of orchards and of all fruitful lands; and it became also sacred to Mendes, the Destroyer, or the Avenging power of Ra, the Sun.

738.—BRUIISING SERPENTS’ HEADS.—*Gen. iii. 15.*

There are various traditions connected with the serpent among heathen nations. The Hindoos relate of their god

Krishnoo, that, having a terrible encounter with a black serpent, which had a thousand heads, he tore them off one by one, and trampling on them, the serpent was completely vanquished. This tradition, doubtless, had its origin with the Scriptures. Now that the words "it shall bruise thy head" comprehend nothing less than the utter destruction of the devil by Jesus, our great Deliverer, is manifest, on referring to the customs in those countries where serpents abound; and it is well known there, if not elsewhere, that there is no certain mode of insuring the death of these creatures but by bruising or crushing the head; one reason for this being, as is said, that the heart is situated so near the head.

Upon the top of a date palm we once saw a very large cobra capello. As the natives of India will never pass one of these —their enemies, as they call them—without making sure of their destruction, we were obliged to wait and look on while stone after stone was hurled, each as it seemed with deadly aim; but, as the head remained uninjured, the wounds were not mortal, and the snake was enabled for a long time to retain its position. Enraged beyond measure, it writhed with agony, and was at length obliged to unfold itself from the tree, whence it fell, hissing furiously, darting out its forked tongue, and with head erected, making every effort to strike its foes. The men seemed to have but one object in view—so to maim it that they might more easily wound it to death by crushing its head. This was at last effected, the deadly wound was given, and they left its body in triumph by the road-side. It was not possible to witness such a scene and not remember the first blessed words of grace to a lost world, which included the doom to utter destruction of the deceiver of mankind. Imagination could not fail to picture Satan's flight from the garden, with the never-dying words sounding in his ears, "It shall bruise thy head."—C. W.

739.—SATAN LAMED BY HIS FALL FROM HEAVEN. *Luke x. 18.*

There is a strangely widespread belief that Satan is lame, and that this was caused by his fall. In classical mythology we find limping Vulcan; and Hephaistos was lamed by his fall when hurled by Zeus from Olympus. Our idea of the devil always includes the clubbed or cloven foot. The Namaguas of South Africa have a "deity" whose occupation it is to cause pain and death; his name is Tsui 'kuap, or "Wounded Knee." Dr. Livingstone tells of the Bakwains,

another people of South Africa, "It is curious that in all their pretended dreams, or visions of their god, he has always a crooked leg, like the Egyptian Thau." In Mainas, South America, they believe in a treacherous demon, *Uchuella-chaqui*, or Lame-foot, who in dark forests puts on a friendly shape to lure Indians to destruction ; but the huntsmen say they can never be deceived if they examine this demon's foot-track, because of the unequal size of the two feet. The native Australians believed in a demon named *Biam*, who was conceived as black and deformed in his lower extremities ; they attribute to him many of their songs and dances, but also a sort of small-pox to which they were liable.

The same idea of the fall of angels into demons may possibly explain our figuring demons with *horns*. The origin of those horns may be the *aureole*, or golden rays about the head, which we find depicted in artistic representations of saints and angels. Satan is depicted with such an "aureole" in various relics of early art, and, in our old illustrated Bibles, Moses is shown with two shining rays rising from his head, which might easily deteriorate into horns when applied to evil beings.

740.—PUNISHMENT FOR A FALSE BALANCE.—*Prov. xi. 1.*

The kind of fraud here referred to was held in great detestation, and frequently visited with severe punishment when detected.

"A police officer observing one morning a female, not a native, carrying a large piece of cheese, inquired where she had purchased it ; being ignorant of the vendor's name, she conducted him to his shop, and the magistrate suspecting the quantity to be deficient in weight, placed it in the scales, and found his suspicions verified : whereupon he straightway ordered his attendants to cut a portion of flesh from the delinquent's person equivalent to the just measure. The order was instantly executed, and the sufferer bled to death."—*Joliffe's Letters.*

741.—MOLOCH RITES AMONG THE JEWS, ETC.—*Acts vii. 43.*

"The rites of Moloch are derived by a very simple mental process from the most obvious aspects of the sun as the quickening and the consuming power in Nature. The child offered to Moloch was offered to the god by whom he was generated, and as the most precious of all the fruits of the earth for which his genial aid was implored, and his destruc-

tive intensity deprecated." During the desert-journeyings many of the people seem to have clung to the old Egyptian gods. It has been needlessly questioned whether the children were really sacrificed. The fact is, that the idol Moloch was of brass, and its throne of brass ; its head was that of a calf, and wore a royal crown ; its stomach was a furnace, and when the children were placed in its arms they were consumed by the fierce heat—their cries being drowned by the beating of drums ; from which, *toph* meaning a drum, the place of the burning was called *Tophet*.

Moloch represents the destructive power of Baal, the sun. "The uniformity of the traditions by which the midsummer fires of Northern Europe have been called Baal-fires, or Bel-fires, warrant the belief that they are actually descended from the ancient rites of Baal, even apart from the notorious fact that they have so generally been accompanied by the superstition that it is a benefit to children to leap over, or be passed through, such fires."

The following letter appeared in the *Times* in July, 1871 :—
"Sir, It may interest some of your readers to know that last night (being St. John's Eve, old style) I observed within a mile or so of this town [Lerwick, Shetland] seven bonfires blazing, in accordance with the immemorial custom of celebrating the midsummer solstice. These fires were kindled on various heights around the ancient hamlet of Sound, and the children leaped over them, and "passed through the fire to Moloch," just as their ancestors would have done a thousand years ago on the same heights, and their still remoter progenitors in Eastern lands many thousand years ago," etc.

"At the popular annual festival held in India in honour of Dharma Rajah, and called the Feast of Fire, the devotees walk barefoot over a glowing fire extending forty feet. When the procession reaches the fire, they stir it into activity, and take a little of the ashes, with which they rub their foreheads ; and when the gods have been carried three times round it, they walk over the fire. Some carry their children in their arms."

742.—NURSES.—*Gen. xxxv. 8 ; 2 Kings xi. 2.*

Mothers, in the earliest times, suckled their offspring themselves, and that from twenty to thirty-six months. The day when the child was weaned was made a festival (1 Sam. i. 22—24); in case the mother died before the child was old enough to be weaned, or when from any circumstance she was

unable to afford the child a sufficiency of nourishment, nurses (*minikoth*) were obtained. In later ages nurses were more frequently employed, and were reckoned among the principal members of the family. They are, accordingly, in consequence of the respectable station which they sustained, often mentioned in sacred history.

743.—THE ALL-KNOWING GOD.—*Psalm cxxxix.*

The following hymn is taken from the *Atharva-Veda* and shows how near the language of the ancient poets of India may approach to the language of the Bible :—

“ 1. The great lord of these worlds sees as if he were near. If a man thinks he is walking by stealth, the gods know it all.

“ 2. If a man stands, or walks, or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third.

“ 3. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna’s loins ; he is also contained in this small drop of water.

“ 4. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the king. His spies proceed from heaven toward this world ; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth.

“ 5. King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws the dice, he settles all things.

“ 6. May all thy fatal nooses, which stand spread out seven by seven and threefold, catch the man who tells a lie, may they pass by him who tells the truth.”

744.—THE KING’S PLACE IN A CAMP.—*I Sam. xxvi. 5.*

Dr. Kitto says, “A very slight reference to existing usages in the East will suffice to elucidate the present and other allusions contained in the Scriptures to the form of encampments. In all the different forms of encampment—the nomade, the travelling, the military—a general preference is given to a circular arrangement. The circumstances of the ground sometimes compel a departure from it, and the additional exigencies connected with pasturage and water render this more frequent among the Bedouins than in other cases. With them, when the circular form can be adopted, the place of honour, occupied by the emir, sheikh, or chief, is in

the centre, the other tents being pitched at a respectful distance around. Under the ordinary circumstances of a camp, however, the chief often, among some tribes, foregoes this distinction for the sake of the character for hospitality, which requires him to have his tent, in every form of encampment, the nearest to that direction from which strangers usually arrive. The Eastern military and regal camps, when the grounds allow, are also disposed circularly ; and, if the army be large, in a number of concentric circles, the royal pavilion being in the centre. A description which Mr. Morier gives of the encampment of the Persian army in the plain of Oujan well explains this, except in the circumstance that, as the king had a palace in the plain, and resided in it instead of in a tent, *that became the central object.* ‘*Around this building to an immense extent, at various intervals, was spread the camp, consisting of tents and pavilions of all colours and all denominations. An order had been issued that every tent in the camp should be pitched with its entrance immediately facing the palace, by which it was intended that every one who came forth should make the *ser ferou*, or bow the head to the royal abode. . . . The king thus became, as it were, the *nave of a great wheel*, and he was so completely hemmed in by his troops, that if an enemy had appeared it would have been impossible to get at him without first cutting a road through the labyrinth of ropes and tents which everywhere surrounded him;*’”

745.—THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.—*Exod.* ix. 14.

It has long been understood that these were terrible aggravations of the ordinary calamities of the land. Travellers give accounts which make this quite clear. The following notes are taken from Lepsius (*Discoveries in Egypt*) :—

“ Suddenly the storm grew to a tremendous hurricane, such as I have never seen in Europe, and hail fell upon us in such masses as almost to turn day into night. . . . Our tents lie in a valley, whither the plateau of the pyramids inclines, and are sheltered from the worst winds from the north and west. Presently I saw a dashing mountain flood hurrying down upon our prostrate and sand-covered tents, like a giant serpent upon its certain prey. The principal stream rolled on to the great tent ; another arm threatened mine without reaching it. But everything that had been washed from our tents by the shower was torn away by the two streams, which joined behind the

tents, and carried into a pool behind the Sphinx, where a great lake immediately formed, which fortunately had no outlet.

"Now comes the plague of mice, with which we were not formerly acquainted; in my tent they grow, play, and whistle, as if they had been at home here all their lives, and quite regardless of my presence. At night they have already run across my bed and face, and yesterday I started terrified from my slumbers, as I suddenly felt the sharp tooth of such a daring guest at my foot.

"Above me a canopy of gauze is spread in order to keep off the flies, these most shameless of the plagues of Egypt, during the day, and the mosquitoes at night. . . . Scorpions and serpents have not bitten us yet, but there are very malicious wasps, which have often stung us."

746.—THE INTERIOR OF THE TOMB OF DAVID.—*1 Kings ii. 10.*

This is sacredly preserved, and none are allowed to enter it; but a young American lady, a Miss Barclay, gained admission to the mausoleum with a female friend, a near relative of the keeper; she spent an hour in the sanctuary, and took a sketch of the interior. She gives the following description of what she saw:—"The room is insignificant in its dimensions, but is furnished very gorgeously. The tomb is apparently an immense sarcophagus of rough stone, and is covered by green satin tapestry, richly embroidered with gold. A satin canopy of red, blue, green, and yellow stripes hangs over the tomb, and another piece of black velvet tapestry, embroidered in silver, covers a door in one end of the room, which, they said, leads to a cave underneath. Two tall silver candlesticks stand before this door, and a little lamp hangs in a window near it, which is kept constantly burning. . . . The ceiling of the room is vaulted, and the walls covered with blue porcelain in floral figures."

747.—SALT SWEPT OUT.—*Matt. v. 13.*

"The salt of Palestine, obtained from salt marshes along the sea-shore, when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is collected, much earth and other impurities are necessarily gathered with it; such salt soon effloresces, and turns to dust, not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is sown; so this corrupted salt is carefully swept up, carried forth, and thrown

into the street. There is no place about the yard, house, or garden where it can be tolerated.”—*Thomson.*

748.—CROWDED WITH IDOLS.—*Acts xvii. 16.*

One of the Roman satirists says, “It was easier to find a *god* in Athens than a *man*.” How full the city was of altars and temples and idols may be judged from the description given by Dr. Howson. “Among the deified heroes were memorials of the older divinities—Mercuries, which gave their name to the street in which they were placed; statues dedicated to Apollo, as patron of the city, and her deliverer from plague, and in the centre of all, the altar of the twelve gods. If we look up to the Areopagus, we see the temple of that deity from whom the eminence received the name of Mars’ Hill; and we are aware that the sanctuary of the Furies is only hidden by the projecting ridge beyond the stone steps and the seats of the judges. If we look forward to the Acropolis, we behold there, closing the long perspective, a series of little sanctuaries on the very ledges of the rock—shrines of Bacchus and Æsculapius, Venus, Earth, and Ceres, ending with the lovely form of the Temple of Unwinged Victory, which glittered by the entrance of the Propyloea above the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Thus, every god in Olympus found a place in the Agora. But the religiousness of the Athenians went even further. For every public place and building was likewise a sanctuary. The Record House was a temple of the Mother of the Gods. The Council House held statues of Apollo and Jupiter, with an altar of Vesta. The theatre at the base of the Acropolis, into which the Athenians crowded to hear the words of their great tragedians, was consecrated to Bacchus. The Pnyx, on whose elevated platform they listened with breathless attention to their celebrated orators, was dedicated to Jupiter on High, with whose name those of the Nymphs of the Demus were gracefully associated. And, as if the imagination of the Attic mind knew no bounds in this direction, abstractions were deified and publicly honoured. Altars were erected to Fame, to Modesty, to Energy, to Persuasion, and to Pity.” There is little reason for wonder if the Apostle Paul, entering this city and walking in its streets, found “his spirit stirred up within him when he saw the city crowded with idols.”

749.—THE ANGEL OF DEATH.—*Job xviii. 14.*

“The Semitic angel of death is known in theology only in the degradation which he suffered at the hands of the Rabbins,

but originally was an awful but by no means evil genius. The Persians probably imported him, under the name of Asuman, for we do not find him mentioned in their earlier books, and the name has a resemblance to the Hebrew *shamad*, to exterminate, which would connect it with the Biblical “destroyer,” Abaddon. This is rendered more probable because the Zoroastrians believed in an earlier demon, *Vizaresha*, who carried souls after death to the region of Deva-worshippers (India). The Chaldaic angel of death, *Malk ad Mousa*, may have derived his name from the legend of his having approached Moses with the object of forcing his soul out of his body, but being struck by the glory of Moses’ face, and by virtue of the Divine name on his rod, was compelled to retire. The legend, however, is not so ancient as the name, and was possibly a Saga suggested by the name. . . . There was gradually developed among the Jews two angels of death, one (Samaël, or his agent Azraël) for those who died out of the land of Israel, and the other (Gabriel) for those who had the happier lot of dying in their own country. Samaël is pretty certainly a conception borrowed from outlying Semitic tribes. What that conception was we find in Job xviii. 14, where he is “the king of terrors,” and still more in the Arabic Azraël. The legend of this typical angel of death is that he was promoted to his high office for special service. When Allah was about to create man he sent the angels Gabriel, Michael, and Israfil to the earth to bring clay of different colours for that purpose; but the Earth warned them that the being about to be formed would rebel against his Creator, and draw down a curse upon her (the Earth), and they returned without bringing the clay. Then Azraël was sent by Allah, and he executed his commission without fear, and for this he was appointed the angel to separate souls from bodies. Azraël had subordinate angels under him.

Azraël was often represented as presenting to the lips a cup of poison. It is probable that this image arose from the ancient ordeal by poison, whereby draughts, however manipulated beforehand with reference to the results, were popularly held to be Divinely mingled for retributive or beneficent effects. “Cup” thus became among Semitic tribes a symbol of fate. The “cup of consolation,” “cup of wrath,” “cup of trembling,” which we read of in the Old Testament; the “cup of blessing” and “cup of devils” spoken of by Paul have this significance. . . . The symbol was repeatedly used by Christ, “Let this cup pass from Me,” “The cup that My Father hath given Me to drink shall I not drink it?” “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I

drink of?" and the familiar association of Azraël's cup is expressed in the phrase, "taste of death."—*Conway*.

750.—LEWD FELLOWS.—*Acts xvii. 5.*

In Acts we read of "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." The word lewd means indecent, unclean, immodest in the direction of licentiousness. The word lewd comes from the A.S. *leode* = the people, and was generally applied to the common people; and the word baser is derived from the French *bas* = low, humble, but not necessarily worthless or wicked. Hence these "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" were persons of the lowest class of the common people, that is, the roughs of the city. These common people were generally so immoral in their character that the word *leode*, which simply meant people, became at length significant of immorality, and lewd obtained its present meaning.

751.—PLOUGHING IN THE COLD.—*Prov. xx. 4.*

Ploughing and sowing in the East begins in November, and continues according to opportunity all through the winter. Dr. Thomson says: "Our farmers do actually plough in the severest weather. I have often seen them shivering with cold, and contending with wind and rain, quite enough to discourage those who are not sluggards. But time has become precious and critical, and he who expects to reap must sow, no matter how tempestuous the weather. This hard necessity of winter work is mainly owing to the wretched implements used, and to a strange deficiency in agricultural science and skill. If the farmers had good ploughs and adequate teams they might break up and prepare their ground in fair weather, and then, when sufficient rain had fallen, they would sow the whole crop in a few days. But these men, with their frail ploughs and tiny oxen, must wait until the ground is saturated and softened, however late in the season that may be. Then they cannot sow, and plough in, more than half an acre per day, and few average so much, and hence the work is dragged along for months."

"I have often pitied the farmer when ploughing in the cold rains and pitiless winds, and it requires more decision of character than belongs to a sluggard to bear up against them; he therefore retreats into his hut, kindles a little fire, and dozes away his time by the side of it, enveloped in pungent smoke."

752.—CARE TAKEN OF SIGNET RINGS.—*Esther* iii. 12.

The Rev. H. B. Tristram, in travelling through Palestine, desiring a number of guards in order to secure to his party a safe passage through parts of the land, it was necessary for a treaty to be drawn up to complete the arrangements. He says: "Then came the momentous business of affixing the seals. The seal was not worn in this case on the finger, but from the depths of some part of the sheikh's under garments an unsavoury cotton rag was produced, knotted and twisted, at one end of which was carefully folded the signet ring. A little ink being rubbed over it, it was then impressed upon the documents. As the chieftain could not write, we saw at once the jealous precaution with which the signet was guarded. 'To trust a man with your ring,' is a Bedouin proverb expressive of unbounded confidence, and indeed it would practically amount to entrusting a friend in England with blank signed cheques. The signature written with the pen was no security in the Arab's eye, and we were requested, after we had signed the deeds, to affix our seals, not with wax, but with ink; nor till this ceremony was completed did Sheikh Hamzi's deep-set eye twinkle on the pile of sovereigns on the office table as without doubt his own."

753.—THE INFLUENCES OF THE MOON.—*Deut.* xxxiii. 14.

Both good and evil influences have been ascribed to the moon; but the latter appear to predominate. Some of these are indicated in the very striking Scotch word, *glamour*. Professor Cowell, of Cambridge, says: "Glam, or the nominative *glamr*, is also a poetical name for the moon. It does not actually occur in the ancient literature, but it is given in the glossary in the *Prose Edda*, in the list of the very old words for the Moon." Vigfusson in his dictionary says: "The word is interesting on account of its identity with Scot. Glamour, which shows that the tale of Glam was common to Scotland and Iceland, and this much older than Grettir (in the year 1014)." The Ghost or Goblin Glam seems evidently to have arisen from a personification of the delusive and treacherous effects of moonlight on the belated traveller. There is a curious old Sanskrit word, *glau*, or *glav*, which is explained in all the old native lexicons as meaning "the moon." It might either be taken as "waning," or in a casual sense "obscuring."

Conway gives the following illustrations of ideas associated with moonlight. "The Hindu loves to dwell on the milder

and quieter aspects of human life, and an extract from an early mediæval poet, Bhasa (seventh century), will show the deceptive character of moonlight as regarded from the Hindu point of view.

"The cat laps the moonbeams in the bowl of water, thinking them to be milk; the elephant thinks that the moonbeams threaded through the intervals of the trees are the fibres of the lotus-stalk; the woman snatches at the moonbeams as they lie on the bed, taking them for her muslin garment: oh, how the moon, intoxicated with radiance, bewilders all the world."

The Icelandic legend of the struggle of the hero Grettir runs, in part, thus: "Bright moonlight was there without, and the drift was broken, now drawn over the moon, now driven off from her; and even as Glam fell, a cloud was driven from the Moon, and Glam glared up against her." When the hero beheld these glaring eyes of the giant Ghost, he felt some fiendish craft in them, and could not draw his short sword. This half-light of the moon, which robs the Strong of half his power, is repeated in Glam's curse: "Exceedingly eager hast thou sought to meet me, Grettir, but no wonder will it be deemed though thou gettest no good hap of me; and this I must tell thee, that thou now hast got half the strength and manhood which was thy lot if thou hadst not met me: now I may not take from thee the strength which thou hast got before this; but that may I rule, that thou shalt never be mightier than thou art, . . . therefore this weird I lay on thee, ever in those days to see these eyes with thine eyes, and thou wilt find it hard to be alone—and that shall drag thee unto death." The moon's power is limited to the spell of illusion he can cast. Presently he is laid low; the "short sword" of a sunbeam pales, decapitates him. But after Glam is burned to cold coals, and his ashes buried in skin of a beast, "where sheep-pastures are fewest, or the ways of men," the spell lay upon the hero's eyes. "Grettir said that his temper had been nowise bettered by this, that he was worse to quiet than before, and that he deemed all trouble worse than it was; but that herein he found the greatest change, in that he was become so fearsome a man in the dark, that he durst go no-whither alone after nightfall, for then he seemed to see all kinds of horrors. And that has fallen since into a proverb, that Glam lends eyes, or gives Glamsight (Glamour) to those who see things nowise as they are."

In the cloudless skies of the East, where the moon shines

with such exceeding clearness, its effects upon the human frame have been found most injurious. The inhabitants of these countries are most careful in taking precautionary measures before exposing themselves to its influence. Sleeping much in the open air, they are careful to cover well their heads and faces. It has been proved beyond a doubt that the moon smites as well as the sun, causing blindness for a time, and even distortion of the features.

Sailors are well aware of this fact; and a naval officer relates that he has often, when sailing between the tropics, seen the commanders of vessels waken up young men who have fallen asleep in the moonlight. Indeed, he witnessed more than once the effects of a moonstroke, when the mouth was drawn on one side and the sight injured for a time. He was of opinion that, with long exposure, the mind might become seriously affected. It is supposed that patients suffering under fever and other illnesses are affected by this planet, and the natives of India constantly affirm that they will either get better or worse, according to her changes.

It is well known that meat, when exposed to the moon-beams, is quickly tainted. The smiting power of the moon has doubtless led to many of the superstitions respecting it, and in some parts of Ireland to this day the poor people cross themselves at the new or full moon, and say, "Mayest thou leave us as well as thou hast found us."—*C. W.*

754.—BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN.—*Job xl. 15, xli. 1.*

It is curious to trace the process by which Leviathan transmitted from Jonah to the Middle Ages the idea of "the belly of hell," and Behemoth's jaws expanded in the "mouth of hell" of the miracle plays.

The Rabbins appear to have been at their wits' end to account for the existence of the two great monsters which had got into their sacred records. Unwilling to admit that Jehovah had created foes to His own kingdom, or that creatures which had become foes to it were beyond His power to control, they worked out a theory that Behemoth and Leviathan were made and preserved by special order of Jehovah, to execute His decrees at the Messianic Day of Judgment.

Bochart first identified the Behemoth with the hippopotamus and showed the accuracy of the description. Dr. Tristram says: "It is clear that the description suits the hippopotamus exactly, and it alone." The word in Hebrew probably means the great beast, or the beast of beasts, that which combines in

the highest degree the marvellous powers and instincts of the graminivorous animals. The Leviathan is just as certainly the crocodile.

755.—TRADITION OF CAIN AND ABEL'S OFFERING.

Gen. iv. 3, 4.

The Mohammedans give this very curious account of the first sacrifices. Each of the men, Cain and Abel, was born with a twin sister; when they were grown up, Adam, by God's direction, ordered Cain to marry Abel's twin-sister, and Abel to marry Cain's; but this Cain refusing to agree to, because his own sister was the more handsome, Adam ordered them to make their offerings to God, thereby referring the dispute to His determination. They say that Cain's offering was a sheaf of the very worst of his wheat; but Abel's a fat lamb, the very best of his flock. God signified His approval of Abel's sacrifice by causing it to be consumed by fire from heaven, but of Cain's He took no notice.

In relating the murder, the Mohammedans say, to show how easily he might have overcome Cain, that Abel was the stronger. Some of them say that Cain beat out Abel's brains with a stone; and that while he was cogitating as to how he should effect the murder, the devil appeared to him in human form, and showed how to do it by crushing the head of a bird between two stones.

In addition to the above, they say that when Cain had committed the murder he became excessively troubled, and carried the dead body about on his shoulder till it became putrid, not knowing how or where to hide it. At length God sent a raven to him, which by scratching a hole in the ground and burying another raven therein, showed Cain how to dispose of his burden. The Jews tell substantially the same tale, only they say the raven appeared, not to Cain, but to Adam, who thereupon buried the body of his son.

756.—TERROR BY NIGHT.—*Psalm xci. 5.*

In the "Bishops' Bible" the word now rendered "terror" is translated "bugs," and the sentence runs, "Thou shalt not be afraid of any bugs by night." As it is not in the least likely that the translators meant to indicate the troublesome, but by no means dangerous, insect which we now associate with the word, we are led to inquire for some other relationship; and we find that our familiar word *bogey*, a sort of

nickname for an evil spirit, comes from the Slavonic word for God—*Bog*. Here in the West we find it as *bogey* (Welsh, *bwg*, a goblin), but probably it began as the *Baga* of cuneiform inscriptions, a name of the Supreme Being, or possibly the Hindu *Bhaga*, Lord of Life.

This instance illustrates both the deterioration in the moral value of words as they pass down through the generations, and into various lands ; and it also indicates how the superstitious night-fear of spirits may pass into mere annoyance at troublesome night insects ; a change which a scientific age is likely to make on many long cherished superstitious notions.

It need hardly be added that Eastern peoples have a peculiar fear of the night ; pestilence is supposed to stalk abroad then, robbers attack then, and in times of war night expeditions were not unusual.

757.—EASTERN SACKCLOTH.—*2 Sam.* iii. 31.

Sacks are usually made of hair in the East, whence we may understand that where sackcloth is mentioned, haircloth is intended. Hence the idea is different from that which we, whose sacks are not of the same material, would affix to the term. That this is correct, seems to be confirmed by the fact that the use of haircloth as a penitential dress was retained by the early Oriental monks, hermits, and pilgrims, and was adopted by the Roman Church, which still retains it for the same purposes. Haircloth was, moreover, called “sackcloth” by the early Greek and Latin fathers, and this seems conclusive. Perhaps, in a general sense, the word means any kind of very coarse cloth, but undoubtedly more particularly cloth of hair than any other. There is a reference on this practice of assuming a mortifying dress as an expression of grief or repentance in *Exod.* xxxiii. 4. The principle is so obvious that there are few nations among which, in mournings for the dead, some kind of mortifying habit has not been adopted. We do not know that sackcloth is now much used for this purpose in the East ; but ornaments are relinquished, the usual dress is neglected, or it is laid aside, and one coarse or old assumed in its place.—*Kitto*.

758.—THE IMPRESSIONS MADE ON US BY THE SERPENT-FORM. *Gen.* iii. 15 ; *Prov.* xxx. 19.

These are well illustrated by the following passage from Jules Michelet, a man of a very sympathetic nature :—

"It was one of my saddest hours when, seeking in nature a refuge from thoughts of the age, I for the first time encountered the head of a viper. This occurred in a valuable museum of anatomical imitations.

"The head marvellously imitated and enormously enlarged, so as to remind one of the tiger's and the jaguar's, exposed in its horrible form a something still more horrible. You seized at once the delicate, infinite, fearfully prescient precautions by which the deadly machine is so potently armed. Not only is it provided with numerous keen-edged teeth, not only are these teeth supplied with an ingenious reservoir of poison which slays immediately, but their extreme fineness, which renders them liable to fracture, is compensated by an advantage that perhaps no other animal possesses, viz., a magazine of supernumerary teeth, to supply at need the place of any accidentally broken. Oh what provisions for killing! What precautions that the victim shall not escape! What love for this horrible creature! I stood by it *scandalised*, if I may so speak, and with a sick soul. Nature, the great mother, by whose side I had taken refuge, shocked me with a maternity so cruelly impartial. Gloomily I walked away bearing on my heart a darker shadow than rested on the day itself, one of the sternest in winter. I had come forth like a child; I returned home like an orphan, feeling the notion of a Providence dying away within me."

759.—LEGEND CONCERNING ABRAHAM.—*Gen. xii. 10, 11.*

The following is taken from the Talmud:—"On approaching Egypt, Abraham locked Sarah in a chest, that none might behold her dangerous beauty. But when he was come to the place of paying custom, the collector said, 'Pay us the custom.' And he said, 'I will pay the custom.' They said to him, 'Thou carriest clothes,' and he said, 'I will pay for clothes.' Then they said, 'Thou carriest gold;' and he answered them, 'I will pay for gold.' On this they further said to him, 'Surely thou bearest the finest silk;' he replied, 'I will pay custom for the finest silk.' Then said they, 'Surely it must be pearls that thou takest with thee;' and he only answered, 'I will pay for pearls.' Seeing they could name nothing of value for which the patriarch was not willing to pay custom, they said, 'It cannot be; but thou open the box, and let us see what is within.' So they opened the box, and the whole land of Egypt was illumined by the lustre of Sarah's beauty—far exceeding even that of pearls!"

760.—THE WORD HEATHEN.—*Gal. ii. 9.*

It has been suggested that this means simply, “*of the heath*,” and like the word *pagan*, which simply denotes “*a villager*,”* refers to those who in any country held by the old gods while the mass of the people favoured new ones. Conway says: “In earlier times the rule was for each religion to denounce its opponent’s gods as devils. Gregory the Great wrote to his missionary in Britain, the Abbot Melitus, second Bishop of Canterbury, that ‘whereas the people were accustomed to sacrifice many oxen in honour of demons, let them celebrate a religious and solemn festival, and not slay the animals to the devil, but to be eaten by themselves to the glory of God.’ Thus the devotion of meats to those deities of our ancestors, which the Pope pronounces demons, which took place chiefly at Yuletide, has survived in our more comfortable Christian banquets.” Those who held fast by the old customs and beliefs were called pagans, and heathen, because this would chiefly apply to those who lived in the scattered districts beyond the advancing tide-lines of civilisation.

In this connection mention may be made of the efforts made to put the old deities up to dishonour, by figuring them in pictures, and in exterior church-architecture, as frightful and bestial beings. Often these are set to support water-spouts; sometimes they are brackets that hold their foes, the saints. “Who that looks on the grinning bestial forms carved about the roof of any old church—as those on Melrose Abbey and York Cathedral—which, there is reason to believe, represent the primitive deities driven from the interior by potency of holy water, and chained to the uncongenial service of supporting the roof-gutter—can see in these gargoyle (French, *gargouille*, dragon) anything but carved imprecations? Was it to such ugly beings, guardians of their streams, hills, and forests, that our ancestors consecrated the holly and mistletoe, or with such that they associated their flowers, fruits, and homes? They were caricatures, inspired by missionaries, made to repel and disgust, as the images of saints beside them were carved in beauty to attract.” There are sufficient indications of the nobler associations which those we now call

* The word *pagan* now means a worshipper of idols, and is derived from *pagus*, a villager. The Gospel was first preached in cities; and long after citizens had become Christianised, villagers remained in heathen darkness, until at length, idolatry being confined to villages and remote districts, the *pagus* was regarded as a *pagan* in the present acceptation of the word.

"heathen" connected with their gods. "That goddess who in Christian times was pictured as a hag riding on a broom-stick was Frigga, the Earth-Mother, associated with the first sacred affections clustering around the hearth; or Freya, whose very name was consecrated in *frau*, woman and wife. The mantle of Bertha did not cover more tenderness when it fell to the shoulders of Mary. The German child's name for the pre-Christian Madonna was Mother Rose: distaff in hand, she watched over the industrious at their household work; she hovered near the cottage, perhaps to find there some weeping Cinderella and give her beauty for ashes."

761.—GNASHING OF TEETH, OR THE COLD ASSOCIATIONS OF HELL.—*Matt.* viii. 12.

M. D. Conway has collected some curious cases illustrating the blending of the figures of extreme heat and extreme cold in the idea of hell. "The Scandinavian demon *Hel*, phonetically corresponding with Kali, the Black One (Gothic, Halja), whose abode is an icy hole, has her name preserved as a place of fiery torment. In regions where cold was known to an uncomfortable extent as well as heat, we usually find it represented in the ideas of future punishment. The realm called Hades suggests cold. Tertullian and Jerome say that Christ's own phrases "outer darkness" and the "gnashing (chattering) of teeth," suggest a place of extreme cold alternating with the excessive heat. Traces of similar speculations are found with the Rabbins. Thus Rabbi Joseph says Gehenna had both water and fire. Noah saw the Angel of Death approaching and hid from him twelve months. Why twelve? Because, explains Rabbi Jehuda, such is the trial of sinners, six in water, six in fire. Dante, following Virgil, has frigid as well as burning hells; and the idea was refined by some scholiasts to a statement which would seem to make the alternations of future punishment amount to a severe ague and fever. Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, has blended the Rabbinical notions with those of Virgil in his terrible picture of the frozen continent, where—

The parching air

Burns frore, and cold performs th' effect of fire:
Thither by harpy-footed Furies haled
At certain revolutions all the damn'd
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immcvable, infix'd, and frozen round.

With which may be compared Shakespeare's lines in *Measure for Measure*—

The delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice.

In Thibet hell is believed to have sixteen circles, eight burning, eight frozen. Plutarch, relating the vision of Thespesius in Hades, speaks of the frozen regions there. In the *Kalendar of Shepherds* (A.D. 1506) a legend runs: " Lazarus said, 'I sawe a flode of frosome yee in the whiche envyous men and women were plonged unto the navyll, and then sodynly came a colde wynde ryght great that blewe and dyd depe downe all the envyous into the colde water that nothyng was seen of them.' "

Dr. Plumptre says: "The two words 'weeping and gnashing of teeth,' are found in combination six times in St. Matthew and once in St. Luke (xiii. 28). In their literal meaning they express that intensest form of human anguish in which it ceases to be articulate. The latter word, or rather the cognate verb, is used also to express "rage" (Acts vii. 54). Their spiritual meaning we naturally connect with the misery of those who are excluded from the joy and blessedness of the completed kingdom, and that is, doubtless, what they ultimately point to."

762.—AN IDOL-MAKING CITY.—*Acts* xix. 24, 25.

Abbé Huc visited in his travels the City of Tolon-Noor, of which he writes:—"The magnificent statues, in bronze and brass, which issue from the great foundries of Tolon-Noor are celebrated not only throughout Tartary, but in the remotest districts of Thibet. Its immense workshops supply all the countries subject to the worship of Buddha with idols, bells, and vases employed in that idolatry. While we were in the town, a monster statue of Buddha, a present from a friend of Oudchou-Mourdchin to the Talé-Lama, was packed for Thibet, on the backs of six camels. The larger statues are cast in detail, the component parts being afterwards soldered together.

" We availed ourselves of our stay at Tolon-Noor to have a figure of Christ constructed on the model of a bronze original which we had brought with us from France. The workmen so marvellously excelled that it was difficult to distinguish the copy from the original. The Chinese work more rapidly and

cheaply, and their complaisance contrasts most favourably with the tenacious self-opinion of their brethren in Europe."

763.—SHALMAN AND BETH-ARBEL.—*Hos.* x. 14.

One of the most interesting of the monuments discovered by Mr. Rassam during his excavations in Assyria last year, is a series of bronze plates found by him at Balawat, a few miles from Nineveh. These plates are covered by repoussé work, representing scenes from the annals of Shalmaneser II., who reigned from B.C. 858 to 824. They were intended to ornament one of the four gates of the royal palace, and the ornamentation must have been magnificent. The gates were at least twenty feet high, as is shown by the bronze coverings of the side-posts, which have also been found. The latter are covered with two long inscriptions, which, it is plain, were intended for ornament, and not for reading, since the lines of the writing run downward from top to bottom. The best preserved of these inscriptions relates to the campaign of Shalmaneser in Babylonia. The designs upon the plates which protected the gates themselves are full of interest to the ethnologist and historian, as they were the work not of Phoenician, but of native Assyrian artists, who made up for want of skill by realistic exactness. Among other designs are duplicate representations of Hamath, Carchemish, and Arne, a city of the Armenian monarch Arramu. Hamath is represented as a large city, with four battlemented towers, flanked by a fortress on either side and with a single entrance between the two central towers. Carchemish, the Hittite capital, is of smaller size, with three towers of unequal height and with two gates—a large one in the centre of the fortifications, and another between the central and right-hand towers. The latter gate seems to have communicated with the ford across the Euphrates, which is represented as flowing at the foot of the walls. The Hittites wear the long robes and pointed caps they have on the Egyptian monuments, and they bring as tribute oxen, sheep, gazelles, and baskets of a curious shape, which resemble that of a character frequently met with among the so-called Hamathite or Hittite hieroglyphics. The Armenian subjects of Arramu have a very marked physiognomy, with rounded noses and little hair on the face, and they wear helmets of a Greek pattern. Another design depicts the sources of the Tigris, where there seems to have been baths, with three square entrances through the surrounding rocks to where a figure of the king was engraved on the side of the

hill overlooking the stream. A bronze plate acquired by M. Rassam three years ago, on which the tribute of Tyre and Sidon is represented, turns out to have formed part of the same series of bronzes. To the same series also belong some fragments now in Paris, which have lately been described by M. Lenormant in the *Gazette Archéologique*. On these the tribute of a city in Lebanon is represented, and probably also that of Jehu of Israel. Most of the bronze plates contain representations of the royal tent and throne, with a sentry on guard; while on some of them is depicted the passage of the army, with its chariots and baggage, over mountains and rivers. The king generally receives the tribute in person. He has the cedaris or *cudurru* on his head, a bow in his left hand, and a long robe. Near him stand the Rab-saris (2 Kings xviii. 17), or chief of the eunuchs, called *ner ecalli*, or "prince of the palace" in the inscriptions, the *abaraccu*, or head of the civil administration, and several eunuchs, two of whom act as scribes, while a third holds the *kalmattu*, or parasol, over the monarch's head. In one of the inscriptions attached to the designs Shalmaneser is called simply Shalman (Sallimmanu). This suggests to M. Lenormant an explanation of the passage in Hos. x. 14, where allusion is made to the destruction of Beth-Arbel by Shalman. Arbela was among the towns which joined Assur-day-anpal, the son of Shalmaneser, in his revolt against his father, toward the end of the latter's reign; and its capture and sack seems to have made a deep impression. As Arbel was chiefly noted for its great temple of the goddess Istar, or Ashtoreth, it is possible that the expression used by the prophet, Beth-Arbel, or "Temple of Arbel," has special reference to the destruction of the temple in question.

764.—THE FEAR OF MOUNTAINS.—*Gen. xix. 19.*

Remembering that Lot had chosen the well-watered plain of Sodom for the convenience of his flocks and herds, it would appear as if he had a sort of dread of mountain districts, with all their perils. To migrating and farming men the mountain must always be an ordeal, irrespective even of its torrents or its occasional lava-streams. It is singular to find that the romantic ideas of the visitor to mountain-lands are not shared by the people who live in them. Ruskin gives a gloomy report of the mountaineers of Europe. "The wild goats that leap along these rocks have as much passion of joy in all that fair work of God as the men that toil among them. Perhaps

more." An American says, "I well remember the emphasis with which a poor woman at whose cottage I asked the path to the Natural Bridge in Virginia, said, "I don't know why so many people come to these rocks; for my part, give me a level country."

It has been suggested that the "high places" may be connected with this natural fear of mountains, and peopling them with demons. "As time went on, devotees proved to the awe-stricken peasantries their sanctity and authority by combating those mountain demons and erecting their altars in the 'high places.' So many summits became sacred. But this very sanctity was the means of bringing on successive demoniac hordes to haunt them; for every new religion saw in those altars on 'high places,' not victories over demons, but demon-shrines. And thus mountains became the very battlefields between rival deities; and the conflict lasts from the cursing of the 'high places' by the priests of Israel to the devil's pulpits of the Alps and Apennines. Near Gernsbach, appropriately to the point where the cultivable valley meets the unconquerable crests of rock, stand the two pulpits from which Satan and an angel contended when the first Christian missionaries had failed to convert the rude foresters. When, by the angel's eloquence, all were won from the devil's side except a few witches and usurers, the fiend tore up great masses of rock and built the 'Devil's Mill' on the mountain-top; and he was hurled down by the Almighty on the rocks near 'Lord's Meadow,' where the marks of his claws may still be seen, and where, by a diminishing number of undiminished ears, his groans are still heard when a storm rages through the valley."

Similar imaginative associations, and usually terrible ones, appear to have been connected with every mountain. The Syrians feared the gods of the Israelites because they supposed them to be the gods of the hills. "The Chinese mountains have their demons. The demon of the mountain T'ai-shan in Shantung, is believed to regulate the punishments of men in this world and the next. Four other demon-princes rule over the principal mountain chains of the Empire. In the superstitions of the American aborigines we find gigantic demons who with their hands piled up mountain-chains as their castles, from whose peak-towers they hurled stones on their enemies in the plains, and slung them to the four corners of the earth. Such was the terrible Apocatequil, whose statue was erected on the mountains, with that of his mother on the

one hand and his brother on the other. He was Prince of Evil and Chief God of the Peruvians. From Quito to Cuzco, every Indian would give all he possessed to conciliate him. The legends of giants and giantesses, so numerous in Great Britain, are equally associated with rocky mountain passes, or the boulders they were supposed to have tossed thence when sportively stoning each other. They are the Tor of the south and the Ben of the north."

Huc tells of the monuments, called Obos, whither the Tartars resort to worship the Spirit of the Mountain. The monument is simply an enormous pile of stones, heaped up without any order, and surmounted with dried branches of trees, from which hang bones and strips of cloth, on which are inscribed verses in the Thibet and Mongol languages. At its base is a large granite urn, in which the devotees burn incense. These obos occur frequently throughout Tartary.

765.—KNOTS IN THE PHYLACTERIES.—*Matt. xxiii. 5.*

The phylacteries consisted of a small box containing the four passages in which frontlets are mentioned (Ex. xiii. 2—10, 11—16; Deut. vi. 4—9, xi. 13—22), written on four slips of vellum for the phylactery of the head, and on one for that of the arm. This is fastened by a loop to thin leather straps, which are twisted in the one case round the arm, with the box on the heart; in the other, round the head, with the box on the brow. They were commonly worn during the act of prayer, and by those who made a show of perpetual devotion, and study of the Law, during the whole day. The Pharisees, in their ostentatious display of piety, made either the boxes or the straps wider than the common size, and wore them as they walked to and fro in the streets, or prayed standing that men might see and admire them.

It appears that the phylacteries were sometimes tied into a knot. Justin Martyr says that the Jewish exorcists used "magic ties or knots." The origin of the custom among the Jews and Babylonians may be found in the Assyrian talismans preserved in the British Museum, of which the following has been translated by Mr. Fox Talbot:—

Hea says: Go, my son !
 Take a woman's kerchief,
 Bind it round thy right hand, loose it from thy left hand !
 Knot it with seven knots : do so twice :
 Sprinkle it with bright wine :
 Bind it round the head of the sick man :

Bind it round his hands and feet, like manacles and fetters.

Sit down on his bed :

Sprinkle holy water over him.

He shall hear the voice of Hea,

Darkness shall protect him.

And Marduk, eldest son of Heaven, shall find him a happy habitation.

(Marduk is the Chaldean Hercules.)

766.—THE WORD “EARING.”—*Ex. xxxiv. 21.*

“Earing” is an old English word for ploughing, and the Hebrew word so translated in the command before us is rendered ploughing in other passages—*e.g.*, Psa. exxix. 3. In several passages—such as Gen. xlvi. 6; Deut. xxi. 4; 1 Sam. viii. 12; and Isa. xxx. 24—the distinction between earing and harvest, which occurs in the text at the head of this article, is also observable. The Latin translators Junius and Tremellius, for our words “earing time,” employ an expression which describes ploughing or tilling time only. Wiclf, in Luke xvii. 7, has, “But who of you hath a servant earing.” The Vulgate has “ploughing” or “tilling.” Indeed, the old word ear, employed in such a sense, is derived from the Latin *arare*, to plough; as arable land, or, as an old translator of Tacitus on the Manners and Customs of the Germans has it, “earable land,” signifies land that is under tillage.

767.—TRACES OF A GENERAL SEVENTH DAY OBSERVANCE. *Gen. ii. 2, 3.*

In certain nations of antiquity the seventh day was a sacred day, as the Phoenicians, the Persians, and the Chinese. In 1869, G. Smith deciphered a religious calendar of the Assyrians, in which every month is divided into four weeks; and seventh days, or “Sabbaths,” are marked out as days on which no work should be done.

Gilfillan says: “The respect shown to the septenary number is a pagan observance of a Sabbathic character which calls for notice. There is no species of subject, religious or secular, Divine or human, spiritual or material, which it has not been employed to illustrate and magnify. And it has been in use for these purposes by peoples the most diversified in condition, and the most remote from each other in place and time. It has been consulted in the construction alike of Egyptian pyramids and cities, Assyrian and Arabian temples, and Indian pagodas. It has determined the number of the seasons of mourning and the days of expiation; of the wonders of the

world and the wise among men. It directed the heating of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. It ruled the retinue of the court of Shushan. Ajax bore his shield covered with seven hides. Boreas ruled in his sevenfold, many-celled cave. The chosen conductors of the great annual sacrifice offered by the wild Indians were seven. The priests who prepared the more solemn feasts in ancient Rome were seven. And the Hindu imagines a sidereal ladder, through whose seven gates his soul is to ascend to the residence of Brahma, the abode of bliss."

A practice immemorial, and so widespread, is strongly corroborative of the appointment of the Sabbath at the creation of the world.

768.—MAKING A JEWISH BOY A SON OF THE LAW.

Luke ii. 42.

The following description refers to ceremonies now practised :—

"A few days ago I attended a very interesting service in a Jewish synagogue. A boy just twelve years old was brought by his father to be admitted as a member of the synagogue ; there were present the parents of the boy, his brothers and sisters, his friends, and some few strangers. After several ceremonies had been performed, the priest read a portion of the law in Hebrew ; the boy then stepped forward to the desk or platform, near the centre of the building, and read from the roll of parchment, in a clear distinct voice, a short psalm. A pause ensued, and then the old man addressed the boy in a few brief sentences—telling him that as he had attained to years of discretion, and knew the difference between right and wrong, a great responsibility rested on him ; that it was his duty to follow the good and shun the evil ; that it became him to show that the instruction he had received had not been given in vain ; that he must diligently practise that which he knew to be right ; be obedient to his parents, kind and affectionate to his brothers and sisters, charitable to those who needed his help, and faithful to the religion he had been instructed in. Then, placing his hand on the boy's head, he prayed earnestly that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob would bless the lad, would preserve him from danger and from sin, and make him a wise and good man if he should be spared to enjoy length of days ; or, if his life should be short, that he might be admitted to the presence of God in heaven."

769.—GOG AND MAGOG.—*Rev. xx. 8.*

These giant figures are properly symbols of the races against which the elect peoples have had or may have to contend. Their genesis may be thus explained. A nation in recounting its triumphs is disposed to magnify its work in every possible way. This may be done by dwelling on the prowess and heroism of its own soldiers; or by extolling the strength, skill, numbers, etc., of the enemy that has been vanquished. In simpler times the disposition was to make out that all conquered people were *giants*; and it is singular to observe how all early nations in their movements towards civilisation encountered giants. We can even trace in ourselves a tendency to attribute unusual size to the Danish pirates and the Norman knights who afflicted England in her early days. We cannot of course say that there have been no giants in the world's history. We may question the existence of giant races, and look upon men of extravagant size as occasional prodigies. Most of the world's giant stories belong to the imaginative child-times of national histories.

In Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, *Magog* is regarded as a geographical term, and is referred chiefly to the Scythians, who became, in the seventh century B.C., a formidable power through the whole of Western Asia. Ezekiel selects these Scythians as the symbol of earthly violence, arrayed against the people of God, but meeting with a signal and utter overthrow. The imagery of Ezekiel has been transferred in the Apocalypse to describe the final struggle between Christ and Antichrist.

770.—ROOT OUT OF A DRY GROUND.—*Isaiah liii. 2.*

Hugh Macmillan well explains the figure employed in this passage. "Owing to their geographical position the central and western regions of South Africa are almost constantly deprived of rain. They contain no flowing streams, and very little water in the wells. The soil is a soft and light-coloured sand, which reflects the sunlight with a glaring intensity. No fresh breeze cools the air; no passing cloud veils the scorching sky. We should naturally have supposed that regions so scantily supplied with one of the first necessities of life could be nothing else than waste and lifeless deserts: and yet, strange to say, they are distinguished for their comparatively abundant vegetation, and their immense development of animal life. The evil produced by want of rain has been

counteracted by the admirable foresight of the Creator, in providing these arid lands with plants suited to their trying circumstances. The vegetation is eminently local and special. Nothing like it is seen elsewhere on the face of the earth. Nearly all the plants have tuberous roots, buried far beneath the ground, beyond the scorching effects of the sun, and are composed of succulent tissue, filled with a deliciously cool and refreshing fluid. They have also thick fleshy leaves, with pores capable of imbibing and retaining moisture from a very dry atmosphere and soil, so that if a leaf be broken during the greatest drought, it shows abundant circulating sap. Nothing can look more unlike the situations in which they are found than these succulent roots, full of fluid where the surrounding soil is dry as dust, and the enveloping air seems utterly destitute of moisture; replete with nourishment and life when all within the horizon is desolation and death. They seem to have a special vitality in themselves; and, unlike all other plants, to be independent of circumstances. Such roots are also found in the deserts of Arabia; and it was doubtless one of them that suggested to the prophet the beautiful and expressive emblem in the passage,—‘He shall grow up before him as a root out of a dry ground.’”

771.—A TRAITOR IN JEBUS.—*2 Sam. v. 6—8.*

Jebus possessed a secret supply of water, which enabled its inhabitants to stand out a siege of any length, probably in the form of subterranean access to perennial springs. It was absolutely necessary to cut this off, in order to take the strong castle. This seems to be alluded to in a peculiar term employed by the Scriptural narrative: “David said on that day, whosoever getteth up to the *tsinnor* and smiteth the Jebusites and the lame and the blind, that one hated of David’s soul, he shall be chief and captain” (*2 Sam. v. 8*). Now what may be the meaning of this term *tsinnor*, which besides occurs only in *Psalm xlvi. 7*, where it is translated “water-spouts?” It has been explained by such various conjectures as “precipice,” “the cliff or portcullis which Joab climbed,” “the ravine by which the stronghold was girt,” “canals,” “outlet for water,” “trough,” “water-pipes,” or, according to the *Speaker’s Commentary*, “the water-course, the only access to the citadel being where the water had worn a channel—some understand a subterranean channel.” Dr. Kennicott, however, seems to have given the best and most acute explanation, rendering the passage thus: “David said,

'Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterranean passage reacheth the lame and blind.' " He adds : " Most interpreters agree in making the word signify something hollow, and in applying it to water, as we have in Josephus 'subterranean cavities.' Jebus was taken by stratagem. It seems to have been circumstanced like Rabatamana, in having also a subterranean passage." Strangely enough, in the excavations made during the year 1867, Captain Warren, near the top of this eastern ridge and about opposite the Fountain of the Virgin, discovered a rock-cut passage descending from the surface by a series of pits, stairways, galleries, leading from the surface down to the water-level, at a point about fifty feet inward from the Fountain. At another time he penetrated from the Fountain inward to the same point, the bottom of a shaft not far from forty feet in depth. This Rev. Mr. Birch seizes upon as the long-lost *tsinnor* of Jebus. Somehow, he thinks, David learned how the Jebusites obtained their supply of water. Evidently there was no chance for taking the stronghold by assaulting its walls. Would any one try the desperate expedient of first pushing through the horizontal water-channel, at the imminent risk of being drowned, then of scaling the upright shaft, where a single stone dropped from above would bring certain death, and afterward of penetrating into the fortress through the narrow passage, which two or three men might readily hold against a hundred ? The plan seemed desperate ; but, as there was no alternative, David issued a proclamation to his followers that whosoever first got up through the *tsinnor*—the name at that time of this subterranean rock-cut passage—and smote the Jebusites should be commander-in-chief.

Mr. Birch suggests that Joab never could have performed the feat of penetrating to Jebus through the *tsinnor*, much less through the difficult passage discovered by Captain Warren, without aid from within the town. In other words some confederate among the Jebusites must have helped Joab in what otherwise would have been really an impossible undertaking. Who, then, was this confederate and, really, traitor to his people ? With whom did Joab, whose craft was even greater than his prowess, negotiate for the secret betrayal of the stronghold of Zion, and on whom depend for aid in ascending the pits ? What was the *bakhshish* promised and given to the ally of the followers of David the king ? He answers only by casting suspicion over a spotless name hitherto. Years after, near the close of David's reign, we find a Jebusite of rank, by

name Araunah, still in possession of the threshing-floor just outside the city of David : possibly he may have been the traitor, and retained this valuable possession as his reward. Josephus says : "Araunah was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem because of the goodwill he bore the Hebrews and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself." Had we a Jebusite account of the fall of the fortress, perhaps it might contain some story which would scarcely justify the noble and spotless character from a Jebusite standpoint we give him. Certain it is, even from our own standpoint, Araunah, who ought to have fallen in the defence of his fortress-town, with his fellows, or have perished with the rest after its capture, was the only man who lost nothing when Jebus fell—neither life, nor goods, nor lands, nor, in the estimation of David with his warriors, honour.

772.—FIRE AND WATER TESTINGS.—*1 Cor. iii. 13.*

The following interesting incident was witnessed by one William Craft, an African, who resided for some time in the kingdom of Dahomey, and is related by Moncure D. Conway, in his work on *Demonology*. The sacred serpents are kept in a grand house, which they sometimes leave to crawl in their neighbouring grounds. One day a negro from some distant region encountered one of these animals and killed it. The people, learning that one of their gods had been slain, seized the stranger, and having surrounded him with a circle of brushwood set it on fire. The poor wretch broke through the circle of fire and ran, pursued by the crowd, who struck him with heavy sticks. Smarting from the flames and blows, he rushed into a river ; but no sooner had he entered there than the pursuit ceased, and he was told that, having gone through fire and water, he was purified, and might emerge with safety.

It is said that to this day the orthodox Israelites set beside their dead, before burial, the lighted candle and the basin of pure water. These have been associated in Rabbinical mythology with the angels Michael (genius of water) and Gabriel (genius of fire).

773.—MOUNTAIN DEW.—*Psalm cxxxiii. 3.*

We had sensible proof at Rasheiya of the copiousness of the "dew of Hermon," spoken of in Psalm cxxxiii. 3, where "Zion" is only another name for the same mountain. Unlike most other mountains which gradually rise from lofty table-lands and often at a distance from the sea, Hermon starts at

once to the height of nearly ten thousand feet, from a platform scarcely above the sea-level. This platform, too—the upper Jordan valley, and marshes of Merom—is for the most part an impenetrable swamp of unknown depth, whence the seething vapour, under the rays of an almost tropical sun, is constantly ascending into the upper atmosphere during the day. The vapour, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain, is rapidly congealed, and is precipitated in the evening in the form of a dew, the most copious we ever experienced. It penetrated everywhere, and saturated everything. The floor of our tent was soaked, our bedding was covered with it, our guns were dripping, and dewdrops hung about everywhere. No wonder that the foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of such marvellous fertility in this land of droughts.—*Tristram.*

774.—WINDOWS OF AGATES.—*Isa. liv. 12.*

“Agates are precious stones, partially transparent and uncrystallised. They are mere varieties of quartz, variously coloured by admixtures of different earths; although the neutral tints are the most frequent. They generally occur in rounded nodules, or in veins in igneous rocks, dropping out when such rocks decompose, by the action of the elements, and being washed down to the places where they are found by mountain streams. They seem to be the product of elements fused by fire, and in this respect they carry out most faithfully the analogy between the condition of the Church and the nature of the promise given in the above passage. Out of her fiery trials precious media of spiritual vision will be constructed for the Church.”

775.—THE BABYLONIAN GOD MENI.—*Isa. lxv. 11, orig. of “that number.”*

Prof. Rhousopoulos, of Athens, has a Phoenician seal, found in Greece, which represents a standing figure, in the Assyrian dress, in front of an altar. The accompanying inscription reads **לְאַחֲדָמָן**, “belonging to the brother of Menes,” or “Meni.” Possibly we have here the Babylonian deity mentioned in Isa. lxv. 11, where, instead of the rendering of the A.V., “that number,” we should read “Meni,” the whole passage being properly translated: “That prepared a table for God, and that furnish the drink-offering unto Meni.” The god Manu is mentioned on the Assyrian tablets. In the Museum of the Archæological Society of Athens is an interesting bronze dish, discovered at Olympia, but of Phœnician workmanship. The

interior is adorned with embossed figures of sphinxes, men, and trees, and an inscription on the outside, in Phœnician characters, reads : "Belonging to Neger, son of Niga'." As the word signifying "son" is the Aramaean *bar*, and not the Phœnician and Hebrew *ben*, it would seem that the owner of the dish must have been of Syrian descent. From the form of the characters, it may be inferred that both the dish and the seal belong to the sixth century B.C. A similar dish, of silver, and of rather later date, was found the year before last, at Palestrina, the ancient Præneste, in Italy. Sphinxes, and patterns like those on the dish from Olympia, are embossed upon it, and it has the legend in Phœnician characters : "Eshmum-ya'ar, son of 'Ashta." Though the word for "son" is here *ben*, the proper name 'Ashta ["maker"] has the characteristic Aramaic termination, known as the emphatic aleph.

776.—MANUSCRIPTS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. *2 Pet. i. 15.*

Such frequent references are now made in Scripture commentaries to the original manuscripts that some general information respecting those which are still in existence may be acceptable and useful to the Bible student. The following paragraph is taken from Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary for English Readers*, and indicates the value which attaches to that entire work :—

"The extant MSS. of the New Testament are classed roughly in two great divisions, determined by their style of writing. Down to the ninth or tenth century the common usage was to write in capital letters, which, as having been originally of a bold and large type, like those we use for the title-page of a *folio Bible*, were spoken of as *literæ unciales* [letters an inch big]. The word is thus applied by St. Jerome, and from this use of it the whole class of MSS. so written are known as *Uncials*. Somewhat later a small running-hand came to be employed, and the later MSS. are accordingly known as *Cursive*. They begin to appear in the tenth century, and extend to the sixteenth. The invention of printing did away with the demand for copies multiplied by transcription, and, with the exception of one or two conspicuous instances of spurious MSS. of parts of the New Testament palmed off upon the unwary as genuine antiquities, none are extant of a later date. Experts in such matters acquire the power of judging, by the style of writing, or the material employed, of the date

of a MS. belonging to either class, and in their judgment there are no extant MSS. of any part of the New Testament earlier than the fourth century. Most critics, however, are agreed in assigning a date as early as A.D. 350 to the two known respectively as the *Sinaitic*, as having been discovered by Tischendorf in the monastery of St. Catherine, on Mount Sion, and the *Vatican*, so named as being the great treasure of the library of the Papal Palace. Two others, the *Alexandrian*—sent by Cyril Lucaris, Patriarch of Constantinople, to Charles I., as a precious Codex, or MS., that had been brought from Alexandria—and the Codex *Ephraem*—so called from its having been found underneath the text of the works of Ephraem, a Syrian Father of the fourth century—are ascribed to the middle of the fifth century. (This way of using up old MSS. by partially effacing the first writing with pumice-stone, and then writing what was thought of more importance, was a common practice in monasteries. The works of many ancient authors have probably fallen a sacrifice to this economy. MSS. so used are known as *palimpsests*, literally ‘rescraped.’) The Cambridge MS., or Codex Bezae (so called because it was given by Theodore Beza, the French reformer, to the University of Cambridge, in 1562), belongs, probably, to the latter part of the fifth, or the beginning of the sixth, century. Others—some complete, and some existing only in fragments, either as originals or palimpsests—came later, in the seventh or eighth, or even as low as the eleventh, century.

“As a matter of convenience, to avoid the constant repetition of the names of these and other MSS., a notation has been adopted by which letters of the alphabet stand for them, as follows:—**N** (Heb. Aleph) for the *Sinaitic*. This contains the whole of the Greek version of the Old Testament, as well as the New, and the *Shepherd* of Hermas, an allegorical book more or less of the *Pilgrim’s Progress* type, ascribed to the second century. It represents the early text that was received at Alexandria.

“A. The *Alexandrian*, containing the Old and New Testaments, a Greek evening hymn, a psalm ascribed to David after the slaughter of Goliath, some psalms ascribed to Solomon, and the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. It is mutilated in parts of St. Matthew and St. John. It represents the text received at Constantinople.

“B. The *Vatican*, containing the Old and New Testaments. This agrees generally with **N**, as representing the Alexandrian text of the fourth century.

“C. The Codex *Ephraeūn* contains portions of most of the Old and New Testaments—2 Thess. and 2 John having disappeared in the process of cutting up and remaking. It agrees generally with N and B; but has been corrected at Constantinople, and so gives later readings in the margin.

“D. The Codex *Berœ* contains the Gospels and Acts only, with a Latin version. The presence of the latter shows a Western origin, and the Greek seems to have been copied by an ill-instructed scribe. The Greek text is peculiar, and has more interpolations than any other MS. The Latin represents the version that preceded the Vulgate.

“L. The Paris Codex, containing the Gospels only, and with several gaps. It agrees generally with N and B.”

Dr. Scrivener gives the following table of New Testament MSS.; many of these, however, are imperfect, some containing only a few chapters or even verses :—

| | | Uncial. | Cursive. |
|--|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Gospels .. | | 34 | 601 |
| Acts and Catholic Epistles .. | | 10 | 229 |
| St. Paul's Epistles .. | | 14 | 283 |
| Revelation .. | | 4 | 102 |
| Evangelistaria (Service Books containing Gospels for the Year) .. | | 58 | 183 |
| Apostles (do. containing Epistles for do.) .. | | 7 | 65 |
| | | <hr/> 127 | <hr/> 1,463 |

777.—EARLY RISING AT KINGS' COURTS.—2 Sam. xv. 2.

“This shows that the judicial and other public business of the kings was despatched very early in the morning. The greatest sovereigns in the East rise at daybreak, and after their morning devotions proceed immediately to the transaction of public business. Thus, in describing the duties of the king of Persia, Sir John Malcolm says, ‘At an early hour in the morning the principal ministers and secretaries attend the king, make reports upon what has occurred, and receive his commands. After this audience he proceeds to his public levée, which takes place almost every day, and continues about an hour and a half. At this levée, which is attended by the princes, ministers, and the officers of the court, all affairs which are wished to be made public are transacted; rewards are given, punishments commanded, and the king expresses aloud those sentiments of displeasure or approbation which he wishes to be promulgated.’ Such are the duties

which, with little variation, an Oriental king has discharged in the early morning, before in England persons of consideration usually leave their beds. This explains why Absalom was obliged to rise early when he wished to ingratiate himself with the persons who went to the morning levée to present their petitions, or to submit their cases to the king's determination."—*Kitto*.

778.—A CURIOUS BUDDHIST FESTIVAL.—*Lev.* xxiii. 24.

Religious festivals are characteristic of all Eastern religions, and they have many features in common. The most curious and interesting is perhaps one detailed by Abbé Huc, the well-known traveller in Tartary and Thibet.

There are four festivals held during the year, the most famous of all being the Feast of Flowers, which takes place on the fifteenth day of the first moon. Huc describes what took place at the celebrated Lamasery (or Buddhist temples and school), at *Kounboum*. "The flowers of the fifteenth of the first moon consist of representations, profane and religious, in which all the Asiatic nations are introduced, with their peculiar physiognomies and their distinguishing costumes. Persons, places, apparel, decorations—*all are formed of fresh butter*. Three months are occupied in the preparations for this singular spectacle. Twenty Lamas, selected from among the most celebrated artists of the Lamasery, are daily engaged in these butter works; keeping their hands all the while in water, lest the heat of their fingers should disfigure their productions. As these labours take place chiefly in the depth of winter, the operators have much suffering to endure through the cold. The first process is thoroughly to knead the butter, so as to render it firm. When the material is thus prepared, the various portions of the butter work are confided to various artists, who, however, all alike work under the direction of a principal, who has furnished the plan of the flowers for the year, and has the general superintendence of their production. The figures, etc., being prepared and put together, are then confided to another set of artists, who colour them, under the direction of the same leader. A museum of works of art in butter was a novel idea.

"On the night of the 15th we were invited to go and see the exhibition. The flowers were arranged in the open air, before the various Buddhist temples of the Lamasery, and displayed by illuminations of great brilliancy. Innumerable vases of brass and copper, in the form of chalices, were placed

upon slight frame-work, itself representing various designs ; and all these vases were filled with thick butter, supporting a solid wick. The illuminations were arranged with a taste that would have reflected no discredit on a Parisian decorator.

"The appearance of the flowers themselves quite amazed us. We could never have conceived that in these deserts, amongst a half savage people, artists of such eminent merit could have been found. From the paintings and sculptures we had seen in various Lamaseries, we had not in the slightest degree been led to anticipate the exquisite finish which we had occasion to admire in the butter works. The flowers were bas-reliefs, in colossal proportions, representing various subjects taken from the history of Buddhisin. All the personages were invested with a truth of expression that quite surprised us. The features were full of life and animation, the attitudes natural, and the drapery easy and graceful. In each bas-relief you at once recognised Buddha, his face, full of nobleness and majesty, appertained to the Caucasian type. On the road which led from one temple to another were placed at intervals small bas-reliefs representing, in miniature, battles, hunting incidents, nomadic episodes, and views of the most celebrated Lamaseries of Thibet and Tartary. Finally, in front of the principal temple, there was a theatre, which, with its personages and its decorations, were all of butter. The *dramatis personæ* were a foot high, and represented a community of Lamas on their way to solemnise prayer. At first the stage is empty, then a marine conch is sounded, and you see issuing from two doors two files of minor Lamas, followed by the superiors in state dresses. After remaining for a moment motionless on the stage, the procession disappears at the sides, and the representation is over.

"Next morning, when the sun rose, not a trace remained of the Feast of Flowers. All had disappeared ; the bas-reliefs had been demolished, and the vast mass of butter thrown down a ravine."

779.—THE FIGURE OF THE DRAGON.—*Rev. xx. 2.*

There seems some reason to conclude that the conventional dragon is the traditional form of some huge Saurian, such as the creatures reproduced in the grounds of the Crystal Palace, which were probably contemporary with the earliest men. The discoveries of Professor March, of Yale College, have proved that the general form of the dragon is startlingly prefigured in nature.

The dragon is "the generalised expression for an active, powerful, and intelligent enemy to mankind ; a being who is antagonism organised, and able to command every weapon in nature for an anti-human purpose."

In Is. li. 9, Ex. xxix. 3, Ps. lxxiv. 13, the dragon is a monster symbolising Babylon or Egypt. In Is. xiii. 22; Ps. xliv. 20, he is a howling animal of the desert.

780.—A VEDIC CONFESSION OF SIN.—*Psalm li.*

The language of confession is virtually the same in all lands. It is the cry unto God, the Great Spirit, of the penitent and humbled heart. David's psalm is to us the model of confession, but the following hymn, or psalm, from the Rig-Veda (the ancient Scripture of India), is worthy to be set beside it. It is addressed to God, conceived as *Varuna*, Lord of earth and sky.

1. Wise and mighty are the works of Him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments (heaven and earth). He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven ; He stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.

2. Do I say this to my own self ? How can I get unto Varuna ? Will He accept my offering without displeasure ? When shall I, with a quiet mind, see Him propitiated ?

3. I ask, O Varuna, wishing to know this my sin. I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same : Varuna it is who is angry with thee.

4. Was it an old sin, O Varuna, that Thou wishest to destroy thy friend, who always praises Thee ? Tell me, thou unconquerable Lord, and I will quickly turn to Thee with praise, freed from sin.

5. Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we committed with our own bodies. Release Vasishtha, O King, like a thief who has feasted on stolen oxen ; release him like a calf from the rope.

6. It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was necessity (or temptation), an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young ; even sleep brings unrighteousness.

7. Let me without sin give satisfaction to the angry god, like a slave to his bounteous lord. The Lord God enlightened the foolish ; He, the wisest, leads His worshipper to wealth.

8. O Lord Varuna, may this song go well to thy heart ! May we prosper in keeping and acquiring ! Protect us, O God, always with your blessings !

781.—THE SERPENT TEMPTER.—*Gen.* iii. 1.

In the British Museum there is a seal, brought from Babylon, which has two figures sitting, one on each side of a tree, with their hands stretched out towards it, while at the back of one there is a serpent.

In engravings, from gems and other ancient remains of Western art, are similar representations. A fruit-laden tree, a serpent, a man and woman, a destroyer of the serpent, are the principal portions of the various pictures.

782.—THE PECULIARITY OF THE LAND OF PALESTINE AS THE SCENE OF DIVINE REVELATION.—*Rom.* iii. 1, 2.

Perhaps the most striking peculiarity of Palestine as the spot chosen by God for His revelations of religious truth to our race, and for the incarnation of the Saviour of mankind, is that it presents within its narrow bounds the characteristics of climate and productions scattered elsewhere over all the habitable zones—from the snowy north to the tropics. The literature of a country necessarily takes the colour of its local scenery and external nature, and hence a book written in almost any land is unfitted for other countries in which life and nature are different. Thus the Koran, written in Arabia, is essentially an Eastern book, in great measure unintelligible and uninteresting to nations living in countries in any great degree different, in climate and modes of life, from Arabia itself. The sacred books of other religions have had only a local reception. The Bible alone finds a welcome among nations of every region over the earth. It is the one book in the world which men everywhere receive with equal interest and reverence. The inhabitant of the coldest north finds, in its imagery, something that he can understand, and it is a household book in multitudes of homes in the sultriest regions of the South.

“Intended to carry the Truth to all nations, it was essential that the Bible should have this cosmopolitan attractiveness. Yet it could not have had it but that such a country as Palestine was chosen to produce it. Within the narrow limits of that strip of coast, as we might call it, are gathered the features of countries the most widely apart. The peaks of Lebanon are never without patches of snow, even in the heat of summer. Snow falls nearly every winter along the summits of the central ridge of Palestine, and over the table-

land east of Jordan, though it seldom lies more than two or three days. On the other hand, in the valley of the Jordan summer brings the heat of the tropics, and the different seasons, in different parts, according to the elevation, exhibit a regular gradation between these extremes. Thus, within the extent of a single landscape, there is every climate, from the cold of Northern Europe to the heat of India.

"A book written in such a land must necessarily be a reflection, in its imagery and modes of thought, so far as they are affected by external nature, of much that is common to man all over the earth. The Scriptures of the two Testaments have had this priceless help in their great mission, from Palestine having been chosen by God as the land in which they were written. The words of prophets and apostles, and of the great Master Himself, sound familiar to all mankind, because spoken amidst natural images and experiences common to all the world."—*Geikie*.

Such an explanation gives force and meaning to the apostle's assertion that the Jews must always be regarded by the world with singular respect, because to them "were committed the oracles of God."

783.—TOSSED LIKE A BALL.—*Isaiah xxii. 18.*

The connection of this figure is somewhat difficult to trace. A gentleman was in the island of Mitylene during a great storm of wind in winter, and observed a peculiar plant, not unlike wormwood, which grows into a compact, globular form, with very stiff stalks and branches. In the winter the plant dies down to the ground, and in its dry and light condition is torn from its roots by the wind, and set bounding over the wide and unenclosed country. He reports having seen five or six of these balls coursing along at once. If such plants were found in the countries familiar to the prophet they would furnish a vivid emblem of the man who is at the mercy of a higher power, and helpless either to choose his own course or to find rest.

The usual explanation of the passage is that God will take Israel up, and fling him, as easily as a man flings a ball, into the far country of Babylon.

784.—OUR LORD'S REPUTED FATHER ONLY A CARPENTER.

Matt. xiii. 55.

As Joseph was of the royal descent of David it appears strange that he should be occupying so humble a position; but

the sentiments concerning different trades which prevail among us do not represent the sentiments prevailing among the ancient Jews. Hillel, the greatest Rabbi of the same age as Joseph, though he too was a descendant of David, spent most of his life in the deepest poverty as a common workman. The green turban, which marks a descendant of Mahomet, may often be seen, in Egypt and Arabia, on the heads of paupers and beggars. Ages before the time of Joseph we find the actual grandson of Moses an obscure, wandering Levite, content to serve Micah as an idolater for 30s. a year and two suits of apparel (*Judges xviii. 30*). In explanation of this last statement, it should be mentioned that, in our version of the Bible, and in many Hebrew copies as well, it is said that “*Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh*,” was the Levite in question. But Manasseh was not a Levite, nor had he a son named Gershom. The truth is that the Jews wilfully altered “*Moses*” into “*Manasseh*,” because they could not endure the thought of a grandson of their great Lawgiver having turned to idolatrous worship.

785.—THE STORK AND THE FIR TREES.—*Psalm civ. 17.*

In the west of Europe the home of the stork is connected with the dwellings of man; and in the East, as the eagle is mentally associated with the most sublime scenes in nature, so, to the traveller at least, is the stork with the ruins of man’s noblest works. Amid the desolation of his fallen cities throughout Eastern Europe and the classic portions of Asia and Africa, we are sure to meet with them surmounting his temples, his theatres, or baths. It is the same in Palestine. But the instinct of the stork seems to be to select the loftiest and most conspicuous spot he can find where his huge nest may be supported; and whenever he can combine this taste with his instinct for the society of man, he naturally selects a tower or a roof. In lands of ruins, which, from their neglect and want of drainage, supply him with abundance of food, he finds a column or a solitary arch the most secure position for his nest; but where neither towers nor ruins abound he does not hesitate to select a tall tree, as both storks, swallows, and many other birds must have done before they were tempted by the artificial convenience of man’s buildings to desert their natural places of nidification.—*Tristram.*

786.—THE TEMPLE ON MOUNT GERIZIM.—*John iv. 20.*

The account given by the Samaritans themselves of the

building of their temple differs essentially, as might be expected, from the Jewish version of the same event. The Samaritans affirm that Joshua caused a temple to be built on Gerizim, and appointed Rus, one of the house of Aaron, to perform Divine service there. They produce a list of high priests who have, in uninterrupted succession, ministered among them from Joshua until now. They refuse to admit that Jeroboam was, as the Jews assert, the author of their schism ; nor do they own that the Israelites were transported by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser ; but they claim to be descended from Jacob. Hence it was that the woman at the well asked our Lord, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" They say that the kings of Syria and Jerusalem revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, who thereupon marched his army into Palestine, took Jerusalem, and went on to Shechem, where he gave the inhabitants but seven days in which to quit the country. He next sent other people into Judaea and Samaria to stock the lands which he had depopulated. But these new inhabitants could not live there, because the fruits, though fair and sound in appearance, contained poison. Nebuchadnezzar was informed of this miracle, and inquired of the original inhabitants the reason for it. They told him that the evil would never be remedied until the Hebrews whom he had deported were restored to the land. At length they obtained a royal edict authorising them to assemble all at one place from whence they might start for their own country. Before setting out, however, there arose a dispute between the Samaritans, the descendants of Joseph and Aaron, and the Jews, whether they should return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple on Mount Zion, or to Samaria and rebuild that on Mount Gerizim. Zerubbabel, on the part of the Jews, maintained that Jerusalem was the proper place for the temple, as might be seen in the books of the prophets. Sanballat alleged that the books to which Zerubbabel appealed had been corrupted for this purpose, and that Gerizim was the spot where the temple should be. The dispute was finally subjected to the arbitrament of fire : Zerubbabel's copy of the Law was consumed in a moment ; but Sanballat's withstood the fire three separate times. For this reason the king honoured Sanballat, made him presents, and sent him back, at the head of the ten tribes, to take possession of Gerizim and Samaria.

787.—THE MIRAGE OR SERAB.—*Isaiah xxxv. 7.*

References to the Mirage are frequently made, but few seem to understand exactly the phenomena that are observed. Bonar gives the following personal observations :—

“The clouds in the north-west looked very dark, threatening rain. The shower, however, did not come immediately, but a cold wind from the same quarter kept blowing most of the day. About half-past twelve we saw some fine specimens of the mirage, or *serāb*, as the Arabs call it, at a short distance to the right. There were some striking though not very high hills in that direction, partly black and partly white, which, in conjunction with the mist which the noonday sun was now bringing up out of the moist ground, formed the whole scene. This mist took possession of a slight hollow, perhaps about two miles in length, and presented the most perfect resemblance to a lake shone upon by a cloudless sun. The mist crept a little way along the base of one of the black and white bluffs, and then there was a precipice projecting far into this sunny lake, the darker parts of the rock appearing exactly like trees springing out of the crevices of the cliff. The mist then sent up some grey masses, which spread themselves along the whole face of the hills for miles, with spaces here and there, some large, some small, which allowed the black patches on the hills to be seen. This produced the scene of a lofty wooded hill, projecting into the centre of the lake, which now seemed dotted with islands, and enlivened with ships moving across its placid waters, while at each end two huge cliffs frowned over it. It was fine, and continued in sight for more than half an hour, till, at a sudden turn, it was shut out by a sandy hillock. In some scientific works we have seen the *serāb* described at length and accounted for on mathematical principles, the same as regulate the appearance of distant vessels upside down at sea. The two things are totally different, the latter being the reflection of a real but far-off object below the horizon ; the other, wholly a deception, conjured up by the wondrous combination of mist and mountain. It is to this that the prophet refers when, speaking of the renovation of the earth in the latter day, he says, ‘And the parched ground [in the Hebrew it is *sherahv*] shall become a pool’ (*Isa. xxxv. 7*),—that is, the *serāb* shall really become what it seems, a pool,—no longer mocking the weary traveller or thirsty Arab.”

788.—ASTARTE AND HER DOVES.—*1 Kings xi. 5.*

M. Lenormant, writing on the queen-goddess Semiramis, draws attention to a Babylonian cylinder on which the goddess Zirbanit is represented as accompanied by two doves, and with a veil stretched behind her, like Astarte Tauropolos on Greek coins in Phœnicia. Now, in Assyrian the dove is called *Samma*, or *Summatu*, as in the Deluge tablet ; and, according to Diodorus, Semiramis was so named “from her doves.” It has long been known that Semiramis, whom the classical writers rationalised into an Assyrian queen, was really the goddess Istar, or Astarte. The image of the goddess as it is represented on the Babylonian cylinder is reproduced on works of art found in Syria, Phœnicia, Asia Minor, Cyprus, the Ægean Islands, and Greece itself, to which it was carried by the Phœnicians. Among the discoveries of Dr. Schliemann at Mycenæ, for example, are some gold representations of the goddess which exactly resemble their Babylonian prototype. Another gold ornament found at Mycenæ represents a temple, with a dove on either side, which strikingly resembles in appearance the famous temple of Astarte, at the Phœnician town of Paphos, in Cyprus, as represented on the coins of the place. The coins of Cyprus also represent the sacred doves in the same position as that occupied by them in the gold ornament from Mycenæ. The temple was probably modelled after that of Mabug, or Hieropolis, in Syria, where Lucian states that a dove was placed on the head of the image of the goddess Astarte.

789.—THE WORD “CIELED.”—*Ezek. xli. 16.*

This word properly means “overlaid,” “panelled.” In the above passage our translators have turned a substantive, meaning “a thin board,” into a participle. “Ciel” in French meaning “canopy” was soon spelt in English “seele”—hence the participle “seeled,” written also “cieled.” The German “himmeL,” “heaven,” is thus also used for a “roof” or “canopy.” But the most curious point about this participle is, that in Deut. xxxiii. 21, in the blessing of Moses upon Gad, who is compared to a lion, we find the extraordinary reading “seated” in many Bibles, whereas not only does the Hebrew mean “overlaid,” but the marginal reading has “cieled.” The Hebrew word *saphan* has not the remotest connection with “seat.” This reading, “seated,” appears in Scrivener’s edition, which gives the best authenticated reading

of the text of 1611. The Genevan Version has “there was a portion—*hid*.” A probable rendering of this passage is, “And he saw the first portion given to him, that the portion assigned by the lawgiver was there *reserved*,” i.e., laid up. It would almost seem that “seated” was an early misprint, occasioning the author of the marginal reading, ignorant of the true meaning of “sealed,” to observe that the Hebrew meant “cieled.”

790.—THE ORIGIN OF WOMAN.—*Gen. i. 27, v. 2.*

Some have supposed that the accounts which first declare that man was created male and female, in one person, and then explain how woman was formed out of man’s rib, may be reconciled in the following way:—The Talmud states that Adam was created at once male and female. This statement is found in the *Bereshith rabbā*. There is a Babylonian legend of the creation, which makes the present world of living creatures be preceded by a world of biform monsters “with two faces.” And the Jewish versions of Ibn Tibbon and Maimonides translate the word used in Gen. ii. 21, “side” instead of “rib.” Suppose then that the first being formed was a double being, both male and female in one, what we have recorded in Gen. ii. 21—23, would be the separation of the two into distinct beings, or the removal of the one from the other’s “side.”

On such a subject there can be given only *conjectures*. It is generally assumed that man has one less rib than woman. It is hardly necessary to say that the assumption is entirely groundless.

791.—THE INORDINATE PRIDE OF THE RABBI. *Matt. xxiii. 7, 8.*

Dr. Geikie collects a number of interesting illustrations of the superstitious honour claimed for, and paid to, the Rabbis in the time of our Lord. These Rabbis were Pharisees who were teachers of the law. They were classed with Moses, the patriarchs and the prophets, and claimed equal reverence. Jacob and Joseph were both said to have been Rabbis. The Targum of Jonathan substitutes Rabbis, or scribes, for the word “prophets” where it occurs. Josephus speaks of the prophets of Saul’s day as Rabbis. In the Jerusalem Targum all the patriarchs are learned Rabbis: Isaac learned in the school of Seth; Jacob attended the school of Eber; and hence,

no wonder that Rabbis are a delight to God like the incense burned before Him. They were to be dearer to Israel than father or mother, because parents avail only in this world, but the Rabbi for ever. They were set above kings, for is it not written, "Through Me kings reign." Their entrance into a house brought a blessing ; to live or to eat with them was the highest good fortune. To dine with a Rabbi was as if to enjoy the splendour of heavenly majesty, for it is written, "Then came Aaron and all the elders in Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." To learn a verse, or even a single letter, from a Rabbi could be repaid only by the profoundest respect. The table of the Rabbi was nobler than that of kings, and his crown more glorious than theirs. They went even further in exalting their order. The Mishna declares that it is a greater crime to speak anything to their discredit than to speak against the words of the law. The words of the Rabbis are to be held as worth more than the words of the prophets. Surely inordinate pride could hardly go further than this ! And we can well understand how unlovely this class appeared in the eyes of Christ, and how anxiously He warned His disciples against imitating their spirit.

792.—SEVEN WOMEN FOR ONE MAN.—*Isaiah iv. 1.*

It is commonly supposed that some immoral conditions are alluded to in this passage, but it is simply a vivid description of the calamities brought upon a nation by continued war. The prophet has been showing how the women's luxuries would be taken away ; now he goes on to show that they would be reduced to utter poverty and desolation, and would be glad to get shelter anywhere, working for their own bread.

Some confusion is occasioned by making this verse commence a new chapter. It properly belongs to the preceding chapter, and is the natural continuation of the descriptions given in it.

The natural connection of the passage removes all obscurity. The men were to fall by the sword, and the slaughter was to be so great that the number of women should far exceed the number of men who should survive. And as to be unmarried and childless was, and still is, an occasion of the greatest reproach in the East, and as polygamy was not forbidden under the Jewish law, therefore, in their distress and poverty and wretchedness, the young women who had minced and flirted through Jerusalem with their gay clothing and fine trinkets, contrary to their natural modesty, would become

suitors to the men, and under the hardest conditions seek the name and credit of wedlock, to be free from the reproach that would otherwise be their portion. Kimchi, the Jewish commentator, says this happened in the days of Ahaz, when Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in Judæa one hundred and twenty thousand men in one day. (See 2 Chron. xviii. 6.) The widows which were left were so numerous that the prophet said : “Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas” (Jer. xv. 8).

Wordsworth gives the literal interpretation of the passage thus, but thinks it insufficient : “The destruction of men will be so general, ‘when men shall fall by the sword, and the mighty in the war’ (iii. 25), that women shall be as seven to one, and there will be seven candidates for one husband. And they would waive the legal claim to conjugal maintenance (Ex. xxi. 10), and would lay aside their maiden modesty, and would be content if they could only be called by his name, as his wife, so that their reproach among men might be taken away.”

It is difficult to conceive of a more vivid and effective way of presenting the utter breaking up of social order, and right family sentiment, produced by the calamities of war.

793.—FANNERS TO FAN.—*Jer.* li. 2.

Comp. xv. 7, and other passages. In the former passage the noun might mean “strangers” or “enemies,” and there would then be, what is not uncommon, a play upon the word. The “vannus” of the Romans was a broad basket, into which the corn and chaff was received after thrashing, and then thrown towards the wind. It is cognate with “ventus,” “wind.” The Jews used a shovel, and threw the corn and chaff against the wind. In Isa. xxx. 24, “shovel” and “fan” are separately mentioned, but the Lexicons draw no distinction. Our word “fan” undoubtedly comes from “vannus,” through the French “vanner,” and the winnowing shovel not only gave rise to the ladies’ “fan,” but to the verb “to fan,” used by our old poets in the sense of “banter.” Thus in *Cymbeline* :—

“The love I bear him
Made me to *fan* you thus ; but the gods made you,
Unlike all others, chaffless.”

794.—A BABYLONISH GARMENT.—*Josh.* vii. 21.

The word used literally means, “a robe, or cloak of Shinar,” the plain in which Babylon was situated. The reference is to

a long robe, or mantle, such as would be worn by kings on state occasions. The Assyrians appear to have been famous, in very early times, for the manufacture of beautiful dyed and richly embroidered robes. And it need occasion no surprise that such a garment should be found in a Canaanitish city, for we know that the productions of the far East found their way through Palestine, both southward towards Egypt, and westward through Tyre, to the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

This may appear to be a sufficient explanation, but it has been suggested that, besides the theft of valuable articles, there may have been something in the things themselves which tended to increase Achan's criminality.

In sculptures brought from Assyria, a sacred tree, of a non-descript character, frequently appears in the scenes depicted on the slabs. Most ancient nations worshipped trees, or vegetation of some kind, and remnants of the custom still linger in some parts of the world. Possibly they revered the tree as the symbol of life and plentifullness. The Assyrians and Babylonians, not content with merely worshipping the sacred tree, also embroidered it upon their garments, probably as much intending them to act as charms as to serve for ornamentation. In the British Museum there is a sculpture of a Babylonian king, with a bow in one hand, and two arrows in the other. On his head is a cylindrical crown, ornamented with the sacred tree, and the attendant griffons, or cherubs. His upper garment reaches from shoulder to ankle, and is ornamented, rather profusely, with the sacred tree. Altogether this symbol appears ten times on the garment alone, and, in the bas-relief, not one-half of the whole dress appears.

It is possible that the royal garment which Achan took was a garment such as this, and decorated with idolatrous symbols, for the sake of which he desired to preserve it.

795.—HINDOO ASSOCIATIONS OF THE SCARLET THREAD. *Gen. xxxviii. 28.*

The "scarlet thread" is sacred among the Hindoos. When the devotees hear the history of the god Pulliar, which takes up twenty-one days, a scarlet thread is tied round the right arm, which shows that they are engaged in a sacred duty, and that during that period "they will not commit sin." When the priest whispers the *ubatheasam* in the ear of a youth, the thread is tied in the same way, to denote the same thing. On the day of marriage the scarlet is bound round the right

wrist, but is taken off on the fourth day. When a person learns to fence, or goes into battle, the thread is fixed round the right arm or right ankle. The priest also sometimes binds it round the wrist of a person in the article of death. It is called *haapu*, which signifies “guard or protector;” and is applied also, in the same sense, to bracelets, armlets, or anklets. A person having on the scarlet thread will not be interrupted; and during the period he will neither shave nor bathe, and will endeavour to be very moral.—*Roberts.*

796.—PRECEPTS GIVEN TO NOAH.—*Gen. vi. 9.*

The Rabbins say that the following moral and religious precepts were given by God to Noah and his sons, but we may well suppose that they represent yet earlier communications of the Divine will.

1. Obedience is due to judges, magistrates, and princes.
2. The worship of false gods, superstition, and sacrilege are absolutely forbidden.
3. Also cursing the name of God, blasphemies, and false oaths (are absolutely forbidden).
4. Likewise all incest and unlawful unions.
5. Also the effusion of blood of all sorts of living animals, murder, wounds, and mutilations.
6. Also thefts, cheatings, lying, etc.
7. The parts of a living animal are not to be eaten.

Maimonides says the six first precepts were given originally to Adam; the seventh was added by Noah for the guidance of his sons. Perhaps the prohibition to shed the blood of animals in the fifth precept was intended to prevent their wanton slaughter.

The above list is interesting as indicating what were felt to be the foundation principles of social morality and religion. It may be usefully compared with the “ten commandments.”

797.—THE STORM CALLED THE SIROCCO.

Deut. xxviii. 23, 24.

Dr. Porter thus describes this fearful storm, which is possibly referred to in the above passage. As the day advanced the *sirocco* came upon us, blowing across the great “wilderness of wandering.” At first it was but a faint breath, hot and parching, as if coming from a furnace. It increased slowly and steadily; then a thick haze, of a dull yellow or brass colour, spread along the southern horizon, and

advanced, rising and expanding until it covered the whole face of the sky, leaving the sun a red globe of fire in the midst. We now knew and felt that it was the fierce *simoom*. In a few moments fine impalpable sand began to drift in our faces, entering every pore: nothing could exclude it. It blew into our eyes, mouths and nostrils, and penetrated our very clothes, causing the skin to contract, the lips to crack, and the eyes to burn. Respiration became difficult. We sometimes gasped for breath, and then the hot wind and hotter sand rushed into our mouths like a stream of liquid fire. We tried to urge on our horses; but though chafing against curb and rein only an hour before, they were now almost insensible to whip and spur. We looked and longed for shelter from the pitiless storm, and for water to slake our burning thirst; but there was none. The plain extended on every side, smooth as a lake, to the circle of yellow haze that bounded it. No friendly house was there, no rock nor bush, no murmuring stream nor solitary well.

798.—A LEGEND OF THE MAGI.—*Matt. ii. 1.*

So little is really known about these “wise men from the East,” that men have been greatly tempted to fill up their story by legend and imagination. Among such legends the following may be noticed, as curious and interesting:—

Many centuries prior to the birth of Christ Balaam had prophesied (*Num. xxiv. 17*) that there should come a “star out of Jacob;” and an ancient apocryphal work, current in the early Church under the name of the “Book of Seth,” says that the Magi were twelve in number, chosen out of their nation, and succeeding each other from father to son for several ages, to observe the moment of the appearance of the star foretold by Balaam. For this purpose they used regularly to ascend a mountain to watch the rising orbs of heaven. At last the star appeared to them, having a young child in the middle of it, and a cross over it. The child spoke to them, and bade them go to Judaea.

799.—IDENTIFICATION OF NEBO.—*Deut. xxxiv. 1—3.*

Canon Tristram gives the following account of this most interesting spot:—“Yet more minutely were we able to examine that mountain of Nebo, with its top of Pisgah, as we stood on the culminating spot of interest in the story of Exodus. On the crest of the range over against Jericho, and

about ten miles from Heshbon, it was our happiness to discover a headland to which the Arabs give the name of Nebbah, bold towards the west and gently sloping towards the east, the field of Pisgah, whence the view of Moses was seen, not imagined. The detail of the panorama in Deuteronomy is exact, and none but one who had been there could have penned it. Commencing from the pine-topped mountains of Gilead to the north 'unto Dan,' for Hermon was in sight, and then round by Naphtali, with the unmistakable dome of Tabor, to the twin hills of Ephraim—Ebal and Gerizim, behind which lay the long brow of Carmel—to the rugged hills of Benjamin, gradually melting into the south country of Judah, while at our feet was spread the Jordan valley with the green oasis of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, as far as Engedi to the south, and the molten mirror of the Salt Sea beneath us. But just north of Ebal a dim haze revealed to us 'the utmost sea.' It has been said that the view was imaginary, because the mountains of Judaea must intercept all view of the Mediterranean from this range. True, they do directly to the west; but the whole was explained when I examined lately a very large raised model of Palestine. As may be remembered, the plain of Esdraelon trends N.W. and S.E., and is separated from that of Acre by a very gentle rise, cut through by the passage of the Kishon. Now, producing a line parallel to Carmel and Ebal from N.W. to S.E., no peaks of any height intervene, and Esdraelon slopes down towards the Jordan. Produce this line, and it intersects the very hill on which we stood among the mountains of Moab. That, and that alone, can be the Nebo of the Pentateuch."

800.—TRACES OF TRINITARIAN FORMS OF THINKING ABOUT GODS AND MEN.—*2 Cor. xiii. 14.*

In Egypt, we find Osiris the Creator, Horus the Preserver, and Typhon the Destroyer. In Babylonia, Anu the Upper Air, Sui (Uri) the Moon, and Samis the Sun. In India, Brahma the Father, Vishnu the Saviour, Siva the Destroyer. In Persia, Zeruâne-Akrane, Infinite Time, Ormuzd the Good, and Ahriman the Evil. In Greece, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, or Heaven, Ocean, and Hell, were the firstborn of Time. In the early Scripture history we find men set in threes:—e.g., Cain, Abel, Seth; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Moses, Aaron, Hur. At last we have Jehovah, Messias, Wisdom; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the full revelation of the Trinity in Unity of the Divine Being.

801.—IMPORTANCE OF GIVING JOSEPH'S GENEALOGY, NOT MARY'S.—*Luke* iii. 23.

If Joseph's genealogy, as presented in either of the Gospels, determines our Lord's birth as the lineal descendant of David, and the legal heir to the throne—if his wife's son was “legally regarded” (*enomizeto*, Luke iii. 23) his son—his genealogy is all-important; while that of Mary, as it would not, according to Hebrew law, have decided the question of descent, would have been invalid as a document. “*Familia matris non familia*” is an ancient maxim amongst the Jews, and it has Divine sanction (see Numb. i. 26).

The law that descent is reckoned on the father's side only, “*Filius sequitur patrem*”—a law recognised by all civilised nations—is not contradicted by the one or two exceptional instances in which the name of a woman's ancestor was adopted by her husband, and transmitted to her offspring, as in the case of Jair the *son of Manasseh*, and that of the *children of Burzillai* (Numb. xxxii. 41; comp. 1 Chron. ii. 21—23; Ezra ii. 61). A descent of this kind was not counted a true descent in any case in which the genealogy was sought (see Ezra ii. 62), and gave no legal claim.

This appears from the case of Zelophehad's daughters (see Numb. xxxvi.). Unless they married husbands of the family of the tribe of their father, who could raise up seed to the family, the name of that family would be lost, and the inheritance would pass to the family into which they married.

Joseph is distinctly honoured, in the Scripture, with the recognition of his *legal* parentage of Jesus (see Luke ii. 41—48, iv. 22; John i. 45, vi. 42).—*G. W. Butler.*

802.—“LET THERE BE LIGHT.”—*Gen. i. 3, 4.*

There is a rabbinical legend, that when light issued from under the throne of God, the Prince of Darkness asked the Creator wherefore He had brought light into existence? God answered, that it was in order that he might be driven back to his abode of darkness. The evil one asked that he might see that; and, entering the stream of Light, he saw across time and the world, and beheld the face of the Messiah. Then he fell upon his face and cried, “This is He who shall lay low in ruin me, and all the inhabitants of hell.”

803.—THE HEBREW WORD ZEBUL.—*1 Kings viii. 13.*

M. Stanislas Guyard, the Arabic scholar, has an interesting article on the Hebrew verb *zabal* and substantive *zebul*, which are usually translated “to dwell” and “dwelling.” Thus in 1 Kings viii. 13, Solomon says to God, according to the A. V., “I have surely built Thee a place to *dwell in*,” and the meaning of “dwelling” is chosen in Ps. xlix. 15. M. Guyard shows, however, that this interpretation rests solely on conjecture, and that the Assyrian inscriptions now give us the correct meaning of the root and its Hebrew derivatives. According to the lexicographical tablets of Nineveh, the root signifies “to lift up,” or “be high,” *bit-zabali*, the equivalent of the Hebrew *beth z'bhul*, being “high house.” What Solomon, therefore, says he built for God was “a lofty house.” The other passages of the Old Testament in which the word is used are made clear by the amended rendering of it. In Gen. xxx. 20, for instance, we must translate “now shall my husband make me high” (reading the *hiphil*), and the name of the tribe of Zebulon will mean “the lofty one.”

804.—BUY WITHOUT MONEY.—*Isa. lv. 1.*

The prophet in this verse appears to have chosen a form of speech very common in the East, even at the present day. Miss Rogers, in *Domestic Life in Palestine*, writing of her visit to Jerusalem, says, “The shopkeepers were crying to the passers-by, ‘Ho, every one that hath money, let him come and buy !’ ‘Ho, such a one, come and buy !’ But some of them seemed to be more disinterested, and one of the fruiteers, offering me preserves and fruit, said, ‘Oh, lady, take of our fruits without money and without price ; it is yours ; take all that you will ;’ and he would gladly have laden our kawass with the good things of his store,—and then have claimed double their value.”

805.—REPRESENTATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF HELL.
Luke xvi. 23.

Conway says :—“At a fair in Tours (August, 1878), I saw two exhibitions which were impressive enough in the light they cast through history. One was a shrunken and sufficiently grotesque production by puppets of the mediæval mystery of hell. Nearly every old scheme and vision of the underworld was represented in the scene. The three judges

sat to hear each case. A devil rang a bell whenever any culprit appeared at the gate. The accused was ushered in by a winged devil (Satan, the accuser), who, by the show-woman's lips, stated the charges against each with an eager desire to make him or her out as wicked as possible. A devil with pitchfork received the sentenced, and shoved them down into a furnace. There was an array of brilliant dragons around, but they appeared to have nothing to do beyond enjoying the spectacle. But this exhibition, which was styled 'Twenty Minutes in Hell,' was poor and faint beside the neighbouring exhibition of the real hell, in which Europe had been tortured for fifteen centuries. Some industrious Germans had got together, in one large room, several hundreds of the instruments of torture by which the nations of the West were persuaded to embrace Christianity. Every limb, sinew, feature, bone and nerve of the human frame, had suggested to Christian inventiveness some ingenious device by which it might be tortured. Wheels on which to break bones, chairs of anguish, thumbscrews, the iron virgin whose embrace pierced through every vital part; the hunger-mask, which renewed the exact torment of Tantalus; and the machine bearing the name of the dragon's head."

806.—EGYPTIAN BURIAL.—*Genesis l. 26.*

The Egyptian had a reverence for his body, built sumptuous tombs, adorned them with frescoes and inscriptions, and called them his "everlasting home." These tombs were often desecrated. We read, for instance, of a commission appointed by Rameses the Ninth, to inspect the tombs of the "royal ancestors" at Thebes. Their report has been translated by M. Chabas. It states that some of the royal mummies were found lying in the dust; their gold and silver ornaments, and the treasures, had been stolen. It also mentions a tomb "broken into from the back, at the place where the stela is placed before the monument, and having the statue of the king upon the front of the stela, with his hound, Bahuka, between his legs. Verified this day, and found intact." Such is the report of 3,000 years ago. Some years ago M. Mariette discovered the mummies of the tomb of this very king, and the broken stela, bearing upon its face a full-length bas-relief of the king, with the dog, Bahuka, between his legs, his name engraved upon his back. It was often difficult to find the tomb in the Necropolis. In the *Tale of Setnau* we read: "He proceeded to the Necropolis of Coptos, with the priests of Isis,

and with the high priest of Isis. They spent three days and three nights in searching all the tombs without discovering the burial-places of Ahura and her son Merhu."

Before the body was laid in the tomb, it was embalmed by the "physicians of Egypt." It is by no means certain why the body was embalmed and preserved. The most probable solution is the idea, that as the soul was purified in the other world so the body should be purified, and prevented putrefying, in this world. So carefully are the mummies preserved, that if a piece of mummy be macerated in warm water it will recover the natural appearance of flesh, and if it be then exposed to the action of the air, it will putrefy.

On the way to the tomb the funeral procession halted on the shore of the sacred lake of its *nome*, or department; and the scene of the Hall of the Two Truths was acted with an awe-inspiring solemnity. Forty-two judges stood to hear if any one on earth accused the dead, as his own conscience was then accusing him in the hidden world. If an accusation was made, and substantiated, the sentence of exclusion from burial was pronounced, even if the dead were the Pharaoh himself.—*J. N. Hoare.*

807.—WAR IN HEAVEN.—*Rev. xii. 7.*

Without touching the theological questions that arise in connection with this passage, we find it curious and interesting to collect notions and representations of a similar character from other religious records. Elsewhere we may expect to find imperfect shadows of that truth revealed to us, with some fulness, in the sacred Word.

Traditional descriptions of the war in heaven are very similar to the more ancient struggles which really give, in imaginative poetic forms, man's encounters with the hardships of nature. "In those encounters man imagined the gods descending earthward to mingle in the fray; but even where the struggle mounted highest the scenery is mainly terrestrial and the issues those of place and power; the dominion of visible light established above darkness, or of a comparatively civilised over a savage race. The wars between the Devas and Asuras in India, the Devs and Ahuras in Persia, Buddha and the Nagas in Ceylon, Garúra and the serpent men in the North of India, gods and Frost-giants in Scandinavia, still concern man's relation to the fruits of the earth, to heat and frost, to darkness or storm and sunshine."

After awhile these legends get spiritualised. At first

poetical, then they tend to become mystical, and then spiritual. Conway gives the following instance of such a legend in its partly mystical form, illustrating the transitional phase. "Garúra expelling the serpents from his realm in India is not a saintly legend; this exterminator of serpents is said to have compelled the reptile race to send him one of their number daily that he might eat it, and the rationalised tradition interprets this as the Prince's cannibalism. The expulsion of Nagas or serpents from Ceylon by Buddha, in order that he might consecrate that island to the holy law, marks the pious accentuation of the fable. St. Patrick expels the snakes that he may make Ireland a paradise physically, and establish his reputation as an apostle by fulfilling the signs of one named by Christ. In the Apocalyptic legend of the war in heaven, the legend has become fairly spiritualised. The issue is no longer terrestrial; it is no longer for mere power; the dragon is arrayed against the woman and child, and against the spiritual 'salvation' of mankind, of whom he is 'accuser' and 'deceiver.'"

The following account of the "Revolt in Heaven" is found in a cuneiform tablet in the British Museum, and has been translated by Mr. Fox Talbot :—

"The Divina Being spoke three times, the commencement of a psalm.
The God of holy songs, Lord of religion and worship
Seated a thousand singers and musicians; and established a choral band
Who to His hymn were to respond in multitudes....

With a loud cry of contempt they broke up His holy song
Spoiling, confusing, confounding His hymn of praise.

The God of the bright crown with a wish to summon His adherents
Sounded a trumpet-blast which would wake the dead,
Which to those rebel angels prohibited return.
He stopped their service, and sent them to the gods who were His enemies.

In their room He created mankind.

The first who received life dwelt along with Him.

May He give them strength never to neglect His word,
Following the serpent's voice, whom His hands had made.

And may the God of Divine speech expel from His five thousand that wicked thousand who in the midst of His heavenly song had shouted evil blasphemies!

808.—THE TERM ELOHIM.—*Gen. i. 1.*

Gesenius gives the meaning of this term as "the revered;" Fürst as "the mighty;" but it is clear that it was applied to gods in general, including such as were deemed false gods by the Jews. The actions ascribed to the Elohim generally reflect the powerful and unmoral forces of nature. When good and evil come to be spoken of, the name Jehovah at once

appears; but in later times we find Elohim used where strength and wonder-working are thought of; e.g. Psalm lxxvii. 14, 19.

The golden calf built by Aaron, as a symbol of the primitive deity, is called Elohim. Solomon was denounced for building altars to Elohim. Jeroboam built altars to two calves, which are called Elohim. Dagon, Ashtaroth, Chemosh, Milcom, are all called Elohim. The English Bible translates Elohim, God; Jehovah, the Lord; and Jehovah-Elohim, the Lord God.

The following are interesting combinations of El with other words:—The most high God (*El-elyon*, Gen. xiv. 18). The everlasting God (*El-elim*, Gen. xxi. 33). The jealous God (*El-kuna*, Exod. xx. 5). The mighty God, and terrible (*El-gadol* and *nora*, Deut. vii. 21). The living God (*El-chi*, Josh. iii. 10). The God of heaven (*El-shemim*, Psalm cxxxvi. 26). The God Almighty (*El-shaddai*, Exod. vi. 2).

809.—“CHRIST IS RISEN.”—*Mark* xvi. 6.

The ceremonies of the Greek Church, and the customs of countries where the Greek form of Christianity prevails, are so little known, that the following description of the Easter season, as it is kept in Russia, cannot fail to be of interest:—

“This is beyond question the chief Church festival and national holiday in Russia. After the long Lenten fast, which is rigorously observed by a large proportion of the population—eggs or milk in any form being disallowed, and in some cases not even fish being partaken of—it may be easily imagined with what a sense of relief and rejoicing the Easter *fête* is welcomed. In the churches no full service is held after Good Friday until Saturday evening. No litany or singing is heard, but prayers, confession and absolution, and the celebration of the Eucharist. On Easter Eve the churches are crowded. A short time before midnight service commences with prayers, reading of the Scriptures, and dirges sung. At midnight a procession is formed, priests with cross upheld, banners and other sacred symbols, and as many of the congregation as elect, each having a lighted candle, leave the church and walk round it (if the church admits of being perambulated), looking for the body of Christ. All who remain inside the church light the candles with which they have provided themselves, and a general illumination takes place. Presently the procession re-enters, singing in full chorus an anthem, ‘Christ is risen.’ The general service recommences—a service of rejoicing and singing—the choir being divided into

two parts, as in the old Greek ‘strophe’ and ‘anti-strophe’ (if sufficiently large to bear division), each part singing alternately. This service lasts about two hours. When concluded, the candles held by the congregation are extinguished, the priest gives a sermon, and after that follows the usual litany or morning service, which lasts about an hour. Then the people disperse to their homes to break their fast. Many will have brought their festal provision to be blessed by the priests. For this purpose tables are spread outside the church, where the people patiently wait during the long service, with their provisions ranged in front of them. This consists of a large round currant loaf, spiced, called a ‘koulitch,’ and is decorated with a flower in paper-work, or more elaborately, according to the means of the individual. The poorest can generally manage to supply themselves with one of these cakes to ‘break their fast.’ The ‘blessing,’ as it is called, consists in the priest saying a short prayer, making the sign of the cross, and sprinkling with holy water. The people then disperse to their homes to break their fast, and it is not surprising if after such long abstinence, with its attendant physical and mental depression, the reaction is proportionate, and excess is often indulged in during the universal holiday that now commences.

“By every one the simple yet sublime Easter greeting is given, ‘Christ is risen,’ and the response is, ‘He is risen, indeed.’ This is accompanied by saluting with a kiss three times, men kissing and embracing each other, women in the same way, and among the simple peasants, men and women greet one another with the Apostolic ‘kiss of peace.’ It is on record that the late Emperor Nicholas, unbending autocrat as he was, used thus to illustrate the grand idea of Christian brotherhood, by saluting in this way soldiers on guard, peasants, and other strangers in the public streets, and I am informed that no Russian emperor, or individual of lower rank, would refuse a salutation thus tendered to him by any one. In the Winter Palace a grand reception is held on Easter-night. In the papers it was officially notified that all persons having the *entrée* at the Court, as well as generals and officers of the guards, of the army, and of the navy, were to assemble at the palace between eleven and twelve o’clock P.M.—ladies in national Russian costume, *i.e.*, the ‘Sarafan,’ gentlemen in full dress. The usual form of service is held in the church at the palace, the guns of the fortress are fired at midnight, a procession is formed, going out to meet Christ, and re-enters singing ‘Christ is risen.’ At the close of the service, before leaving the church,

the emperor salutes the empress, and other members of the imperial family, then the Metropolitan, and the principal officers of state. Having left the church, the emperor proceeds to break his fast, the firing of cannon is again heard, announcing that the emperor has broken his fast and that the Easter festival has commenced.

"Ordinarily on these occasions the emperor takes his stand at the head of one of the noble suite of reception rooms, surrounded by his family, the Metropolitan, and those whom he has already saluted ; and as the male guests approach him, one by one, they give the Easter greeting, 'Christ is risen !' and the emperor gives the usual salutation, kissing each three times. In like manner the ladies present themselves before the empress, who kisses each in the same way. The gentlemen kiss the hand of the empress, after giving the usual greeting. The guests greet and salute each other. I am told that, in addition to the officers, including all colonels, if not captains, who have the right of presenting themselves at Court, a deputation is selected from each regiment in the capital, composed of an officer, a non-commissioned officer, and a private, who represent their regiment at this truly Russian *fête*. This arrangement is as interesting in itself as it seems admirably adapted to link the army in its feelings and associations with intense attachment to the person and throne of the emperor. On the present occasion the emperor was too unwell to undergo the fatigue of this prolonged ceremony. The guests must have numbered many hundreds, probably more than a thousand, and in consequence of the emperor being obliged to depart from the 'custom of the feast' the guests did not give the usual salutation amongst themselves. Thus, this Easter midnight reception, which is so unique in its leading characteristic feature, and which presents such an interesting illustration of Russian national customs, was deprived of its chief attraction.

"After a short night's rest the day is spent in visits of congratulation—always with the Easter greeting—officers present themselves to the general in command, and all the employés visit their chiefs, some commencing as early as eight o'clock in the morning. In a city like St. Petersburg, with such a large military force, it may be supposed that a grand reception takes place at the palace of the Grand Duke Nicholas, who is the general in command of the army of St. Petersburg. Notable features in the streets throughout the day are the numerous officers in full dress—Chevalier Gardes and Gardes-à-Cheval, the plain and serviceable uniform of the line, with the quaint

hats of the Prevbojenki regiments, the handsome uniforms of the Hussars, and the still more striking dress and equipments of the Circassians. Hundreds of officers of all ranks, in their varied costumes, must have formed a brilliant assembly at the Nicholaievsky Palace. In the interior, where there are large establishments, as in the Ural, every official and workman visits the chiefs. Assembled in rooms prepared for the occasion, the host takes a cup of vodki, congratulates those present on the Easter festival, drinks, and takes a piece of the currant loaf; his guests do the same, thus breaking bread in common. Every one salutes the host three times, and when there are many hundreds of such salutations, a sensation of relief is probably experienced when all is finished, and it is remembered that Easter ‘comes but once a year.’ Easter gifts are universal. Domestics present ordinary hard-boiled eggs, coloured, as they make the usual salutation, and receive in return presents of value. So systematically is this done and expected that some servants, on making engagements for service, stipulate for a certain sum monthly or yearly, and a stated sum at Easter and Christmas. New clothes are provided to be worn now—this is considered almost a *sine quâ non* amongst the peasant class. The church bells sound continually, and the week is mostly spent in festivities.

810.—RELIC OF ANCIENT FIRE-WORSHIP CUSTOMS.
2 Kings xvii. 17.

The following very curious account given of what took place in his own early life, by Mr. James Napier, indicates the late survival of the old fire-worship. Mr. Napier, as a child, was supposed to be pining under an Evil Eye, and the old woman, or “skilly,” called in, carefully locked the door, and proceeded as follows: “A sixpence was borrowed from a neighbour, a good fire was kept burning in the grate, and I was placed upon a chair in front of the fire. The operator took a tablespoon, and filled it with water. With the sixpence she then lifted as much salt as it would carry, and both were put into the water in the spoon. The water was then stirred with the forefinger till the salt was dissolved. Then the soles of my feet and the palms of my hands were bathed with this solution thrice, and after these bathings I was made to taste the solution three times. The operator then drew her wet forefinger across my brow, called *scoring aboon the breath*. The remaining contents of the spoon she then cast right over the fire, into the hinder part of the fire, saying as

she did so, ‘*Guid preserve fræ a’ skaith.*’ These were the first words permitted to be spoken during the operation. I was then put in bed, and, in attestation of the charm, recovered. To my knowledge this operation has been performed within these forty years, and probably in many outlying country places it is still practised. The origin of this superstition is probably to be found in ancient fire-worship. The great blazing fire was evidently an important element in the transaction ; nor was this a solitary instance in which regard was paid to the fire. I remember being taught that it was unlucky to spit into the fire, some evil being likely shortly after to befall those who did so. Crumbs left upon the table after a meal were carefully gathered and put into the fire. The cuttings from the nails and hair were also put into the fire.”

811.—THE BITTERN.—*Zeph.* ii. 14.

A bird somewhat smaller than a heron, of solitary habits, and frequenting marshy lands (*Botaurus stellaris*). Its voice resembles the bellowing of a bull, so it has been called “the bull of the bog.” The bittern is an interesting bird ; but it is a bird of the wilds, almost a bird of desolation, avoiding alike the neighbourhood of man and the progress of man’s improvements. It is a bird of recluse habits ; so that when any locality is in the course of being won to usefulness, the bittern is the first to depart ; and when any one is abandoned, it is the last to return. “The bittern shall dwell there” is the final curse, and implies that the place is to become uninhabited and uninhabitable. It will not bear the whistle of the ploughman, or the sound of the mattock ; and the tinkle of the sheep-bell, or the lowing of the ox (although the latter bears so much resemblance to its own hollow and dismal voice that it has given foundation to the name), is a signal for it to be gone.

The habits and instincts of the bittern give us a clue to the force and propriety of the prophetic denunciation against Babylon (Isa. xiv. 23), “I will also make it a possession for the *bittern*, and pools of water : and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zephaniah employs similar imagery in his prophecy of the overthrow of Nineveh : “The Lord will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. Both the cormorant and the *bittern* shall lodge in the upper lintels of it ; their voice shall sing in the windows ; desolation shall be in the thresholds” (*Zeph.* ii. 13, 14).

The bittern, when wounded, defends itself with great obstinacy, throwing itself on its back and darting its sharp beak with great force at its foe. The plumage is beautifully varied with spots, bars, and dashes of black on a fine reddish-yellow ground. The feathers of the head and neck are long, and are capable of being thrown forward.

812.—THE LEGENDARY HISTORY OF CYRUS.—*Isaiah xliv. 28.*

Astyages, the last king of Media, had a dream that the offspring of his daughter, Mandane, would reign over Asia. He gave her in marriage to Cambyses, and when she bore a child (Cyrus) committed it to his minister, Harpagus, to be slain. Harpagus, however, moved with pity, gave it to a herdsman of Astyages, who substituted for it a stillborn child, and having so satisfied the tyrant of its death, reared Cyrus as his own son.

813.—THE BUILDING SAMSON PULLED DOWN.
Judges xvi. 27, 30.

Various attempts have been made to explain the form of the building which could be thus overthrown by bending and breaking the central pillars. The following is a suggestion made by the traveller Shaw :—

We read (ver. 27) that about *three thousand persons were upon the roof, to behold while Samson made sport*, viz., to the scoffing and deriding Philistines. Samson, therefore, must have been in a court or area below; and consequently the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient *τεμένη*, or *sacred enclosures*, which were only surrounded, either in part or on all sides, with some plain or cloistered buildings. Several palaces and *dou-winas*, as the courts of justice are called in these countries, are built in this fashion, where, upon their public festivals and rejoicings, a great quantity of sand is strewed upon the area for the pellowans or *wrestlers* to fall upon; whilst the roofs of these cloisters are crowded with spectators, to admire their strength and activity. I have often seen numbers of people diverted in this manner upon the roof of the dey's palace at Algiers; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, has an advanced cloister, *over against the gate of the palace* (Esth. v. 1), made in the fashion of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as these, the bashaws, the kadees, and other great

officers, distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of their provinces. Here likewise they have their public entertainments, as the lords and others of the Philistines had in the house of Dagon. Upon a supposition, therefore, that in the house of Dagon there was a cloistered building of this kind, the pulling down the front or centre pillars which supported it, would alone be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines.

814.—STRAINING AT A GNAT.—*Matt. xxiii. 24.*

The expression may be more precisely rendered, “*strain out a gnat*,” and then there may be a reference intended to the custom that prevailed, among the more strict and accurate Jews, of straining their wine and other drinks, lest they should inadvertently swallow a gnat, or some other unclean insect: supposing that thereby they would transgress (*Lev. xi. 20, 23, 41, 42*). A traveller in North Africa, where Eastern customs are very jealously retained, reports noticing that a Moorish soldier who accompanied him, when he drank, always unfolded the end of his turban, and placed it over the mouth of his *bota*, drinking through the muslin to *strain out* the gnats, whose larvæ swarm in the water of that country.

815.—IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.—*2 Tim. i. 10.*

This declaration can only be fully realised as we estimate the state of knowledge and feeling in the Roman Empire about the time of our Lord's appearance. An instance will aid us in such a realisation better than elaborate descriptions. “Sixty-three years before the birth of Christ, according to the usual reckoning, Julius Cæsar, at that time the chief pontiff of Rome, and, as such, the highest functionary of the State religion, and the official authority in religious questions, openly proclaimed, in his speech in the Senate, in reference to Catiline and his fellow-conspirators—that there was no such thing as a future life; no immortality of the soul. He opposed the execution of the accused on the ground that their crimes deserved the severest punishments, and that, therefore, they should be kept alive to endure them, since death was, in reality, an escape from suffering, not an evil. ‘Death,’ said he, ‘is a rest from troubles to those in grief and misery, not a punishment; it ends all the evils of life; for there is neither care nor joy beyond it.’ Nor was there any one to condemn such a sentiment even from such lips. Cato, the ideal Roman,

a man whose aim it was to ‘fulfil all righteousness,’ in the sense in which he understood it, passed it over with a few words of light banter ; and Cicero, who was also present, did not care to give either assent or dissent, but left the question open, as one which might be decided either way, at pleasure.” —*Geikie.*

816.—PAINTING THE FACE.—*2 Kings ix. 30.*

“No fashion of the female toilet is of higher antiquity than that of dyeing the margin of the eyelids and the eyebrows with a black pigment. It is mentioned or alluded to, *2 Kings ix. 30*, *Jeremiah iv. 30*, *Ezekiel xxiii. 40*; to which may be added *Isaiah iii. 16*. The practice had its origin in a discovery made accidentally in Egypt. For it happens that the substance used for this purpose in ancient times is a powerful remedy in cases of ophthalmia and inflammation of the eyes, complaints to which Egypt is, from local causes, peculiarly exposed. This endemic infirmity, in connection with the medical science for which Egypt was so distinguished, easily accounts for their discovering the uses of antimony, which is the principal ingredient in the pigments of this class. Egypt was famous for the fashion of painting the face from an early period ; and in some remarkable curiosities illustrating the Egyptian toilette, which were discovered in the catacombs of Sahara, in Middle Egypt, there was a single joint of a common reed, containing an ounce or more of the colouring powder, and one of the needles for applying it. The entire process was as follows :—The mineral powder, finely prepared, was mixed up with a preparation of vinegar and gall apples ; sometimes with oil of almonds or other oils ; sometimes, by very luxurious women, with costly gums and balsams. And, perhaps, as Sonnina describes the practice among the Mussulman women at present, the whole mass thus compounded was dried, and again reduced to an impalpable powder, and consistency then given to it by the vapours of some odorous and unctuous substance. Thus prepared, the pigment was applied to the tip or pointed ferule of a little metallic pencil, called in Hebrew *mukchol*, and made of silver, gold, or ivory ; the eyelids were then closed, and the little pencil, or probe, held horizontally, was inserted between them, a process which is briefly and picturesquely described in the Bible. The effect of the black rim which the pigment traced about the eyelid, was to throw a dark and majestic shadow over the eye ; to give it a languishing and yet

a lustrous expression ; to increase its apparent size, and to apply the force of contrast to the white of the eye. Together with the eyelids, the Hebrew women coloured the eyebrows, the point aimed at being twofold—to curve them into a beautiful arch of brilliant ebony, and at the same time to make the inner ends meet or flow into each other."—*De Quincey.*

817.—THE EXPECTED MESSIAH.—*Rev. xix. 10.*

The diversity and the growth of the national Jewish sentiments concerning the Messiah are well presented in the following passage from Dr. Geikie's *Life of Christ*. A clear and full understanding of the prevailing national idea and feeling can alone explain many of our Lord's allusions, enable us to estimate His difficulties, and set out in bold relief the contrast between His *spiritual* life and work, and the materialistic notions that prevailed :—

"In no other nation than the Jews has such a conception ever taken such root, or shown such vitality. From the times of their great national troubles, under their later kings, the words of Moses, David, and the Prophets had, alike, been cited as Divine promises of a mighty Prince, who should 'restore the kingdom to Israel.' . . . As ages passed, the fascination of the grand Messianic hope grew ever more hallowed, and became the deepest passion in the hearts of all, burning and glowing henceforth, unquenchably, more and more, and irrevocably determining the whole future of the nation.

"For a time Cyrus appeared to realise the promised Deliverer, or at least to be the chosen instrument to prepare the way for Him. Zerubbabel, in his turn, became the centre of Messianic hopes. Simon Maccabæus was made high-priest-king only 'until a faithful prophet—the Messiah—should arise.' As the glory of their brief independence passed away, and the Roman succeeded the hated Syrian as ruler and oppressor, the hope in the Star which was to come out of Jacob grew brighter, the darker the night. Deep gloom filled every heart, but it was pierced by the beam of this heavenly confidence. Having no present, Israel threw itself on the future. Literature, education, politics began and ended with the great thought of the Messiah. When would He come ? What manner of kingdom would He raise ? The national mind had become so inflammable, long before Christ's day, by constant brooding on this one theme, that any bold

spirit, rising in revolt against the Roman power, could find an army of fierce disciples who trusted that it should be he who would redeem Israel.

“‘That the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy’ was only the Christian utterance of a universal Jewish belief respecting the Christ. ‘All the prophets,’ says Rabbi Chaja, ‘have prophesied only of the blessedness of the days of Messiah.’ But it was to Daniel especially, with his seeming exactness of dates, that the chief regard was paid. It was generally believed that ‘the times’ of that prophet pointed to the twentieth year of Herod the Great, and when that was past, not to mention other dates, the year 67 of our reckoning was thought the period, and then the year 135 ; the war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem rising from the one calculation, and the tremendous insurrection under Hadrian the other.

“With a few, the conception of the Messiah’s kingdom was pure and lofty. The hearts of such as Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Simeon, and John the Baptist, realised, more or less, the need of a redemption of the nation from its spiritual corruption, as the first necessity. This grander conception had been slowly forming in the minds of the more religious. Before the days of the Maccabees, the conception of the Messiah had been that of a ‘Son of David,’ who should restore the splendour of the Jewish throne ; and this, indeed, continued always the general belief. But neither in the Book of Daniel nor in the later religious writings of the Jews before Christ is the Messiah thus named, nor is there any stress laid on His origin or birthplace. Daniel, and all who wrote after him, paint the expected One as a heavenly being. He was the Messenger, the Elect of God, appointed from eternity, to appear in due time, and redeem His people. The world was committed to Him as its Judge : all heathen kings and lords were destined to sink in the dust before Him, and the idols to perish utterly, that the holy people, the chosen of God, under Him, might reign for ever. He was the Son of Man, but, though thus man, had been hidden from eternity, in the all-glorious splendour of heaven, and, indeed, was no other than the SON OF GOD, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty of His Father. He was the Archetypal Man—the ideal of pure and heavenly manhood, in contrast to the fallen Adam. Two centuries before our era He was spoken of as the ‘Word of God,’ or as ‘The Word,’ and as ‘Wisdom,’ and as, in this way, the Incarnation of the Godhead.

"Such were, in effect, the conceptions gradually matured of the Messiah—the Immortal and Eternal King, clothed with Divine power, and yet a man—which had been drawn from the earliest, as well as the latest, sacred or religious writings of the nation. But very few realised that a heavenly king must imply a holy kingdom; that His true reign must be in the purified souls of men. Few realised that the true preparation for His coming was no vainglorious pride, but humiliation for sin.

"The prevailing idea of the Rabbis and the people alike, in Christ's day, was, that the Messiah would be simply a great prince, who should found a kingdom of matchless splendour. Nor was the idea of His heavenly origin at all universal: almost all fancied He would be only a human hero, who should lead them to victory."

818.—A CUP OF WATER.—*Mark ix. 41.*

In using this figure of speech our Lord referred to associations which would be in the minds of His auditors, and which would make His words much more suggestive and impressive to them than they are to us. Observing the customs of the modern Egyptians, which often most effectively illustrate the Bible times, Mr. Lane says:—"As the water of the wells of Cairo in Egypt is slightly brackish, numerous 'sackckas' (carriers or sellers of water) obtain their livelihood by supplying its inhabitants with water from the Nile. It is conveyed in skins by camels and asses, and sometimes, when the distance is small, by the 'sackcka' himself. The water-skins of the camel are a pair of wide bags of ox-hide; the ass bears a goat-skin; so also does the carrier, if he have no ass. The general cry of the water-carrier is, '*Oh, may God compensate me!*' Whenever this cry is heard, it is known that a sackcka is passing. . . . There are also other water-carriers, who supply passengers in the streets with water. The goat-skin of a sackcka of this sort has a long brass spout, and he pours the water into a brass cup for any one who would drink. There is a more numerous class who follow the same occupation, bearing upon their backs a vessel of porous grey earth, which cools the water. . . . Many of these, and some of the sackckas who carry the goat-skins, are found at the scenes of religious festivals, and are often paid by visitors to the tomb of a saint, on such occasions, to distribute the water which they carry to passengers—a cupful to whomsoever desires. This work of charity is performed for the *sake of the saint*. The carriers thus

employed are generally allowed to fill their vessels at a public fountain, as they *exact* nothing from the passengers whom they supply. When employed to distribute water to passengers in the streets, they generally chant a short cry, inviting the thirsty to partake of the charity offered them in the *name of God*, and praying that paradise and pardon may be the lot of him who affords the charitable gift."

Other travellers tell of being frequently met with the inquiry, "Will you drink water?" In India water is offered to passengers in honour of the gods.

819.—LILITH.—*Isaiah xxxiv. 14; Heb.*

In this verse the Hebrew word *lilith* is used, and translated *screech-owl*; the Vulgate gives it *lamia*; Luther renders by the term *kobold*; and Gesenius explains it by "nocturna, night-spectre, ghost." One of the most singular of Rabbinical legends gathers round this word, which is assumed to have been the name of an imagined first wife of Adam. Conway relates the legend as follows:—"Lilith was said to have been created at the same time and in the same way as Adam; and when the two met they instantly quarrelled about the headship which both claimed. Adam began the first conversation by asserting that he was to be her master. Lilith replied that she had equal right to be chief. Adam insisting, Lilith uttered a spell called *Shem-hammphorasch*, afterwards confided by a fallen angel to one of the 'daughters of men,' with whom he had an intrigue, and of famous potency in Jewish folk lore, the result of which was that she obtained wings. Lilith then flew out of Eden and out of sight (comp. Rev. xii. 14). Adam then cried in distress, 'Master of the world, the woman whom thou didst give me has flown away.' The Creator then sent three angels to find Lilith, and persuade her to return to the garden; but she declared that it could be no paradise to her if she was to be the servant of man. She remained hovering over the Red Sea, where the angels had found her, while these returned with her inflexible resolution. And she would not yield even after the angels had been sent again to convey to her, as the alternative of not returning, the doom that she should bear many children, but these should all die in infancy.

"This penalty was so awful that Lilith was about to commit suicide by drowning herself in the sea, when the three angels, moved by her anguish, agreed that she should have the compensation of possessing full power over all children after birth up to their eighth day; on which she promised that she would

never disturb any babies who were under their (the angels') protection. Hence the charm (Camea) against Lilith, hung round the necks of Jewish children, bore the names of these three angels—Senóí, Sansenóí, and Sammangelóf. Lilith has special power over all children born out of wedlock, for whom she watches, dressed in finest raiment, and she has especial power on the first day of the month and on the Sabbath evening. When a little child laughs in its sleep, it was believed that Lilith was with it, and the babe must be struck on the nose three times, the words being thrice repeated, ‘Away, cursed Lilith, thou hast no place here !’

“The divorce between Lilith and Adam being complete, the second Eve (*i.e.* mother) was now formed, and this time out of Adam’s rib, in order that there might be no question of her dependence, and that the embarrassing question of woman’s rights might never be raised again.

“Lilith is represented as subsequently marrying Samaël, one of the fallen angels, and to have conspired with him to secure the fall of Adam and Eve. She is supposed to have beguiled the serpent on guard at the gate of Eden to lend her his form for a time, and in it she became the temptress of Eve. In some old pictures of the fall, the serpent tempter is portrayed with a beautiful woman’s head and body, and with a serpent’s tail twined round the tree. This is the design in a picture by Michael Angelo, on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.”

820.—STORIES OF THE CREATION BY PERSIAN BRAHMINS. *Gen. ii. 4.*

One John Marshall, a traveller in the early part of last century, relates the following stories as having been told to him.

“Once on a time,” the Brahmans said, “as (God) was set in eternity, it came into His mind to make something, and immediately no sooner had he thought the same, but that the same minute was a perfect beautiful woman present immediately before Him, which He called *Adea Suktee*, that is, the first woman. Then this figure put into His mind the figure of a man; which He had no sooner conceived in His mind, but that he also started up, and represented himself before Him; this he called *Manapuisse*, that is, the first man; then, upon a reflection of these things, He resolved further to create several places for them to abide in, and accordingly assuming a subtil body, He breathed in a minute the whole

universe, and everything therein, from the least to the greatest."

"The Brahmins of Persia tell certain long stories of a great giant that was led into a most delicate garden, which, upon certain conditions, should be his own for ever. But one evening, in a cool shade, one of the wicked Devotas, or spirits, came to him, and tempted him with vast sums of gold, and all the most precious jewels that can be imagined; but he courageously withstood that temptation, as not knowing what value or use they were of; but at length this wicked Devota brought to him a fair woman, who so charmed him that, for her sake, he most willingly broke all his conditions, and thereupon was turned out."

"There is an ancient Persian legend of the first man and woman, which is very singular. Their names are given as *Meschia* and *Meschiane*, and they lived for a long time happily together: they hunted together, and discovered fire, and made an axe, and with it built a hut. But no sooner had they thus set up housekeeping than they fought terribly, and, after wounding each other, parted. It is not said which remained master of the hut, but we learn that after fifty years of divorce they were reunited."

S21.—IDOL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE EGYPTIAN PLAGUES. *Exod. xii. 12.*

These plagues are all significant, proving the power of God, and rebuking idolatry. 1. The Nile—blood; an object of worship turned into an object of abhorrence. 2. The sacred frog itself their plague. 3. Lice, which the Egyptians deemed so polluting, that to enter a temple with them was a profanation, cover the country like dust. 4. The gad-fly (*Zebub*), an object of Egyptian reverence, becomes their torture. 5. The cattle, which were objects of Egyptian worship, fall dead before their worshippers. 6. The ashes, which the priests scattered as signs of blessing, become boils. 7. Isis and Osiris, the deities of water and fire, are unable to protect Egypt, even at a season when storms and rain were unknown, from the fire and hail of God. 8. Isis and Serapis were supposed to protect the country from locusts. West winds might bring these enemies; but an east wind the Egyptian never feared, for the Red Sea defended him. But now Isis fails; and the very east wind he reverenced becomes his destruction. 9. The heavenly hosts, the objects of worship, are themselves shown to be under Divine control. 10. The last plague

explains the whole. God's firstborn Egypt had oppressed ; and now the firstborn of Egypt are all destroyed.

822.—JOB'S GOEL.—*Job* xix. 25.

A correct and precise translation of this difficult passage, and its connection, will show that Job rather expected his vindicator to appear on this earth, while he lived, than gained any clear vision of the adjustment of all perplexities in the life to come. We give Noyes' translation :—

“ There is hope for a tree,
If it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender branches will not fail ;
Though its root may have grown old in the earth,
And though its trunk be dead upon the ground,
At the scent of water it will bud,
And put forth boughs, like a young plant.
But man dieth and is gone for ever ! ”

* * * * *

Yet I know that my Vindicator liveth,
And will stand up at length on the earth :
And though with my skin this body be wasted away
Yet in my flesh shall I see God.
Yes, I shall see Him my friend ;
My eyes shall behold Him no longer an adversary ;
For this my soul panteth within me.”

823.—HOWLING DERVISHES.—*1 Kings* xviii. 28.

The extraordinary excitement into which men may work themselves on religious subjects is well illustrated by the following passage from a “ Correspondent's Letter :”—

“ At what precise period of Mohammedan history the extraordinary sect of enthusiasts known as the *Roofai*, or Howling Dervishes arose, I am quite unable to state, but, in all probability, these screeching babes of grace are very old and exceptional nuisances indeed. The Howling Dervishes possess, like their *confrères* the Dancing ones, two monasteries at Constantinople—one at Scutari, where they howl on Thursday afternoons, and another in a suburb of Pera close to the Greek quarter of Agia Yanni, or St. John, the day for their ululations in the last-named locality being Sunday, and the time 2.30 P.M. The Scutari performance I have not seen ; but I will briefly summarise the guide-book accounts of it, for the reason that its features differ very widely from those of the exhibition which I witnessed last Sunday at Agia Yanni. According to Murray, the exercises of the dervishes at Scutari begin with the ordinary *namaz*, or prayer. After this they

seat themselves in a circle and repeat the ‘Fatha,’ or first ‘Sura’ of the Koran—a recitation followed by a number of pious ejaculations. Then they all stand up in a circle and slowly give out their shibboleth of ‘La-illah-illah-lah !’ dividing it into *staccato* monosyllables. At the first syllable they bow their bodies forward ; at the second they stand at ‘attention ;’ at the third they bend backwards ; and during the succeeding syllables they vary their postures, inclining themselves now to the right, and now to the left. The slow movements become eventually very rapid ones, the gestures of the body always keeping time with the utterance of the words ; and ultimately the whole verbal formulary is blended into a wild shriek of ‘Il-lah !’ The race is then to the dervish who has the most powerful lungs. While this infernal chorus is being yelled, two singers chant passages from the ‘Borda,’ a poem composed in praise of the Prophet, together with other lyrics eulogistic of the renowned sheiks, Abdul-Kadir-Gilant and Seid Ahmed Roofai. The sheik who acts as coryphaeus of the band of dervishes then begins to stamp his feet on the floor. By this time the fanatics have all gone stark staring mad, and, to use the highly graphic language of Murray, one hears but the single sound ‘Lah !’ echoed forth from this whirlpool of swallowed syllables, which is now and then interrupted by a frenzied outcry of ‘Hoo ! Yahoo !’ meaning ‘He is God !’ Another form of the Howlers’ exercise is the recitation of the ninety-nine attributes of Allah the same number of times, the directing sheik ‘keeping count’ on his rosary of ninety-nine beads. When they come to the sacred name ‘Hoo !’ they rise, form a circle by holding each other’s hands, and swing to and fro, with their long hair tossed about them like black clouds, while their bodies are covered with a profuse perspiration. ‘Many,’ I read, ‘fall down, foaming with enthusiasm, while others are carried out swooning ; and when they have arrived at this beatified state the Roofai are supposed to be endowed with miraculous powers.’”

824.—“NONE EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITIONS.”
Mark vii. 13.

There was this measure of excuse for the Scribes and Rabbis in setting the traditional explanations of the Word of God in such prominence, that the law was written in a language which the people had long since ceased to speak, and probably few could understand, except by the explanations of

the Rabbis. The spirit of dependence on them would rapidly grow among the people, and we cannot wonder if thus they were encouraged to "magnify their office." The reading of the Scriptures came to be discouraged, lest it should win the people's hearts, and they should find out the essential difference between the Word and the Tradition. One hour was to be spent on the Bible in the schools ; two hours on the traditions. "The study of the Talmud alone won honour from God as from man. That vast mass of traditions, which now fills ten folio volumes, was, in reality, the Bible of the Rabbis and of their scholars."

825.—SELA, THE GREATEST ROCK CITY.—*Obad. iii.*

There can be no doubt that *Sela*, or *Petra*, the wonderful rock-city of Edom, is referred to in this passage ; and as this is one of the most curious and wonderful cities on the earth, we give the description of it from Irby and Mangles' *Book of Travels* :—

"Only a portion of a very extensive elevation is seen at first ; but it has been so contrived that a statue with expanded wings, perhaps of Victory, just fills the centre of the aperture in front, which, being closed below by the sides of the rock folding over each other, gives to the figure the appearance of being suspended in the air at a considerable height ; the ruggedness of the cliffs below setting off the sculpture to the highest advantage. The rest of the design opened gradually at every pace as we advanced, till the narrow defile which had continued thus far, without any increase of breadth, spreads on both sides into an open area of a moderate size, whose sides are by nature inaccessible, and present the same awful and romantic features as the avenues which lead to it : this opening gives admission to a great body of light from the eastward. The position is one of the most beautiful that could be imagined for the front of a great temple ; and the richness and exquisite finish of the decorations offer a most remarkable contrast to the savage scenery which surrounds it. It is very lofty, the elevation comprising two stories. In some respects the taste is not to be commended ; but many of the details and ornaments, and the size and proportion of the great door-way especially, to which there are five steps of ascent from the portico, are very noble. No part is built, the whole being purely a work of excavation ; and its minutest embellishments, wherever the hand of man has not purposely effaced and obliterated them, are so perfect, that it may be

doubted whether any work of the ancients, excepting, perhaps, some on the banks of the Nile, have come down to our time so little injured by the lapse of ages. There is, in fact, scarcely a building of forty years' standing in England so well preserved in the greater part of its architectural decorations. There are grottoes in great numbers, which were certainly not sepulchral, especially near the palace ; there is one in particular which presents a front of four windows, with a large and lofty door-way in the centre. In the interior, one chamber of about 60 feet in length, and of a breadth proportioned, extends across three of the windows and the door ; at the lower end, the fourth window seems allotted to a very small sleeping chamber, which is not brought down to the level of the floor of the great apartment, but has a chamber below it of the same size, receiving no light but from the entrance. This, which seems the most important of all the excavated residences, has no ornament whatever on the exterior ; and the same observation applies to all the other excavations of this nature. The access to this house is by a shelf gained out of the side of the mountain ; other inferior habitations open upon it, and more particularly an oven and some cisterns. These antique dwellings are close to an angle of the mountain, where the bed of the stream, after having traversed the city, passes again into a narrow defile, along steep sides of which a sort of excavated suburb is continued, of very small and mean chambers, set one above another, without much regularity, like so many pigeon-holes in the rock, with flights of steps or narrow inclined planes leading up to them. The main wall and ceiling only of some were in the solid rock ; the fronts and partitions being built of very indifferent masonry with cement. It is the first object which presents itself to the traveller on entering Petra from the eastward. It is entirely hewn out of the rock ; the diameter of the podium is 120 feet, the number of seats thirty-three, and of the cunii three. There was no break, and consequently no vomitories. The theatre is surrounded by sepulchres ; every avenue leading to it is full of them, and one may safely say, that a hundred of those of the largest dimensions are visible from it ; indeed, throughout almost every quarter of this metropolis, the depositaries of the dead must have presented themselves constantly to the eyes of the inhabitants, and have almost outnumbered the habitations of the living. There is a long line of them not far from the theatre, at such an angle as not to be comprehended in the view from it, but

forming a principal object from the city itself. The largest of the sepulchres had originally three stories, of which the lowest presented four portals, with large columns set between them ; and the second and third, a row of eighteen Ionic columns each attached to the façade. The rock being insufficient for the total elevation, a part of the story was grafted on in masonry, and is for the most part fallen away. The four portals of the basement open into as many chambers, very dissimilar, both in distribution and arrangements, but all sepulchral, and without any communication with each other. The view from the summit of the edifice is very extensive in every direction ; and although the eye rests upon few objects which it can clearly distinguish, an excellent idea is obtained of the general face and features of the country.”

826.—THE DISEASE OF LEPROSY.—*Luke v. 12.*

The precise details of the progress of this most terrible of all human diseases cannot with any certainty be recorded. Scientific descriptions of diseases could not be given until the modern growth of scientific knowledge. The precise limits of its infectious influence have never been decided. So far as can be ascertained the disease commences with “little specks on the eyelids, and on the palms of the hand, and gradually spreads over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it shows itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly eat its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes are attacked in turn, till, at last, consumption or dropsy brings welcome death.” There were different varieties of the disease, and it was considered hereditary up to the fourth generation. In the opinion of the times it was regarded as a direct punishment of God for special sins.

827.—THE CLEAN NEEDING TO WASH THEIR FEET. *John xiii. 10.*

“In the afternoon we tried the Turkish bath. The attendant first laid aside our clothes, and put one towel, wrapped like a turban, round our head, and another round our waist. Then he conducted us into an inner apartment, the atmosphere of which we could scarcely breathe at first, on account of the

heat and vapour. Our feet, shod with wooden sandals, slid on the smooth marble floors. Next he laid us down on our back upon the smooth marble divan, in the centre of the apartment, washed us with soap, and poured hot water over our heads. All this was done by an Egyptian almost naked, armed with a rough glove of camel's hair. It was not without a shudder that we felt ourselves in such hands, amidst about twenty others, all Mohammedans, with shaved heads and black skins. We were then led to one of the side baths, where the hot water was allowed to pour upon us. The pores being abundantly opened under the operation of so many causes, we were conducted back to the room where we had undressed, laid upon our backs, covered over with a warm quilt, and *shampooed*—the soles of our feet being scraped with an instrument for the purpose, and every joint in our hands and feet made to crack. Lastly, we were offered coffee, and a glass of sherbet; after which we were allowed to dress, and come away, not a little amused as well as refreshed. The custom of passing from the bath to the dressing-room, during which the feet might easily be soiled, reminded us of the true rendering of the precious words of our Lord: ‘He that has been in the bath needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.’”—*Narrative of a Mission to the Jews.*

828.—ROSE-LEAVES USED AS A PERFUME.—*Isaiah xxxv. 1.*

“Rose-water had, as I presume, a foremost place on the toilet of a Hebrew *belle*. Express Scriptural authority for it undoubtedly there is none; but it is notorious that Palestine availed itself of *all* the advantages of Egypt, amongst which the rose in every variety was one. *Fium*, a province of Central Egypt, which the ancients called the garden of Egypt, was distinguished for innumerable species of the rose, and especially for those of the most balsamic order, and for the most costly preparations from it. The Talmud not only speaks generally of the mixtures made by tempering it with oil (i. 135), but expressly cites (ii. 41) a peculiar rose-water as so costly an essence, that from its high price alone it became impossible to introduce the use of it into the ordinary medical practice. Indeed this last consideration, and the fact that the highly-prized *quintessence* cannot be obtained except from an extraordinary multitude of the rarest roses, forbid us to suppose that even women of the first rank in Jerusalem could have made a very liberal use of rose-water. In our times, Savary found a single phial of it, in the place of its manufac-

ture, valued at four francs. As to the *oil of roses*, properly so called, which floats in a very inconsiderable quantity upon the surface of distilled rose-water, it is certain that the Hebrew ladies were *not* acquainted with it. This preparation can be obtained only from the balsamic roses of Fium, of Shiras, of Kerman, and of Kashmire, which surpass all the roses of the earth in power and delicacy of odour; and it is matter of absolute certainty, and incontrovertibly established by the celebrated Langlés, that this oil, which, even in the four Asiatic countries just mentioned, ranks with the greatest rarities, and in Shiras itself is valued at its weight in gold, was discovered by mere accident, on occasion of some festival solemnity in the year 1612."—*De Quincey*.

829.—JACOB AND ESAU.—*Gen. xxv. 27.*

Apart from their individual characteristics and personal histories, these two men may be regarded as types of two distinct principles on which the intercourse of men can be conducted. These have been called the "*Barter* principle and the *Bandit* principle." Jacob—cunning, extortionate, fraudulent in spirit even when technically fair—represents the Barter principle, and is the father of commerce. Esau—brave, impulsive, quick to forgive as to resent, generous, and gallant—represents the Bandit principle, and is the father of aggressive war.

It has been well said that "high things begin low. Astronomy began as astrology; and when trade began there must have been even more trickery about it than now. Conceive of a world made up of nomadic tribes engaged in perpetual warfare. It is a commerce of killing. If a tribe desires the richer soil, or large possessions of another, the method is to exterminate that other. But at last there rises a tribe either too weak, or too peaceful to exterminate, and it proposes to *barter*. It challenges its neighbours to a contest of wits. They try to get the advantage of each other in bargains; they haggle and cheat; and it is not heroic at all, but it is the beginning of commerce and peace."

830.—THE KINGDOM SUFFERING VIOLENCE.—*Matt. xi. 12.*

Our Lord's meaning in the use of this figure appears to have been greatly misconceived. It is supposed that He designed by it to teach, that no persons could gain admittance into the kingdom of heaven except they did violence to themselves, and made such an onslaught upon the kingdom as

would result in their “taking it as by storm.” This interpretation is greatly favoured by the very interesting figure of the “Castle and the Armed Men,” which Bunyan based upon it in his description of the sights at the Interpreter’s House. But the true reference of our Lord may be set forth in the following paraphrase : “ Since the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is persecuted, and the violent Jews are doing their utmost to accomplish its destruction.” The way in which the Jews treated the Baptist, and, after him, our Lord and His disciples, is the best comment on the text.

831.—MATERIALS FOR SANDALS.—*Ezek. xxiv. 17.*

Robinson says : “ The superior also procured for me a pair of the sandals usually worn by the Bedawin of the peninsula, made of the thick skin of a fish which is caught in the Red Sea. The Arabs around the convent called it *Tün*; but could give no further account of it than that it is a large fish, and is eaten. It is a species of Halicore, named by Ehrenberg *Halicora Hemprichii*. The skin is clumsy and coarse, and might answer very well for the external covering of the tabernacle, which was constructed at Sinai; but would seem hardly a fitting material for the ornamental sandals belonging to the costly attire of highborn dames in Palestine, described by the prophet Ezekiel.”

832.—COMMUNITY BY EATING THE FLESH, ETC.

John vi. 51—56.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has collected a number of superstitious rites that indicate to what a common human sentiment our Lord appealed, in His highly figurative and spiritual declaration to His disciples. He is the Truth, and revealed the truth; but curious shadows and suggestions of the truth which He revealed lie about the path of the diligent student of human nature and human thought.

Mr. Spencer says : “ In some cases parts of the dead are swallowed by the living, who seek thus to inspire themselves with the good qualities of the dead, and the dead are supposed to be honoured by this act. The implied notion was supposed to be associated with the further notion that the nature of another being, inhering in all the fragments of his body, inheres too in the unconsumed part of anything consumed with his body ; so that an operation wrought on the remnants of his food becomes an operation wrought on the food swallowed, and therefore on the swallower. Yet another

implication, is that between those who swallow different parts of the same food some community of nature is established. Hence such beliefs as that ascribed by Bastian to some negroes, who think that, 'on eating and drinking consecrated food, they eat and drink the god himself'—such god being an ancestor, who has taken his share. Various ceremonies among savages are prompted by this conception ; as, for instance, the choosing a totem. Among the Mosquito Indians, 'the manner of obtaining this guardian was to proceed to some secluded spot and offer up a sacrifice : with the beast or bird which thereupon appeared, in dream or in reality, a compact for life was made by drawing blood from various parts of the body.' This blood, supposed to be taken by the chosen animal, connected the two, and the animal's life became so bound up with their own that the death of one involved that of the other. Sahagun and Herrera describe a ceremony of the Aztecs (Mexicans) called 'eating the god.' Mendicta, describing this ceremony, says : 'They made a sort of small idols of seeds . . . and ate them as the body or memory of their gods.' As the seeds were cemented partly by the blood of sacrificed boys ; as their gods were cannibal gods ; as Huitzilopochtli, whose worship included this rite, was the god to whom human sacrifices were most extensive, it is clear that the aim was to establish community with gods by taking blood in common."

833.—STRANGE ANCESTORS OF THE MESSIAH.—*Matt. i. 3—6.*

"The mention of the four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Urias, in such a pedigree, is very significant. Tamar, the forgotten one, twice left a childless widow ; Rahab, not only of the accursed seed of the Canaanites, but moreover a harlot ; Ruth, also a long childless widow, and a stranger, and born of the stock of Moab, that nation of incestuous origin, forbidden to enter the house of the Lord unto the tenth generation ; and lastly, the wife of Uriah, the very mention of whom, under this designation, only draws attention to her sin, pointing her out as an adulteress—all these are seen incorporated into the line of the children of Abraham—nay, more, into the holy genealogy of Christ. How beautifully does this accord with the love of God revealed in the Gospel ! 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.' Unto whom ? To the favoured 'children of the kingdom' only ? Nay, but also to the Gentiles, hitherto

aliens from the commonwealth of Israel ; to the weary and heavy laden ; to the outcasts and the sinners."

834.—LEGENDS OF SATAN'S GETTING ENTRANCE INTO THE ARK.—*Gen. vii. 7—10.*

The two following extraordinary legends will do little more than amuse our readers, but they serve to show how human ingenuity has gathered its strange stories round all Scripture incidents.

The Moslem tradition that the devil managed to get into the ark is ancient. He caught hold of the ass's tail just as it was about to enter. The ass came on slowly, and Noah, becoming impatient, exclaimed, " You cursed one, come in quick !" When Noah, seeing the devil in the ark, asked by what right he was there, the other said, " By your order ; you said, ' Accursed one, come in ; I am the accursed one.' "

In an early sixteenth-century picture belonging to Count Uvarof, belonging to the Eastern Church in Russia, Satan is shown offering Noah's wife a bunch of *khmel* (hops) with which to brew *kras*, and make Noah drunk ; for the story was that Noah did not tell his wife that a deluge was coming, knowing that she could not keep a secret. In the old version of the legend given by *Buslaef*, " after apocryphal tradition used by heretics," Satan always addressess Noah's wife as *Eve*. Satan not only taught this new Eve how to make *kras*, but also *voitka* (brandy) ; and when he had awakened her jealousy about Noah's frequent absence, he bade her substitute the brandy for the beer, when her husband, as usual, asked for the latter. When Noah was thus in his cups she asked him where he went, and why he kept late hours. He revealed his secret to his Eve, who disclosed it to Satan. The tempter appears to have seduced her from Noah, and persuaded her to be dilatory when entering the ark. When all the animals had gone in, and all the rest of the family, this Eve said, " I have forgotten my pots and pans," and went to fetch them ; next she said, " I have forgotten my spoons and forks," and returned for them. All this had been arranged by Satan to make Noah curse ; and he had just slipped under Eve's skirt when he had the satisfaction of hearing Noah cry to his wife, " Accursed one, come in !" Since Jehovah Himself was conceived of as unable to prevent the carrying out of a patriarch's curse, Satan was thus enabled to enter the ark, save himself from being drowned, and bring mischief into the human world once more.

Such legends make us deeply feel how foolish man becomes when he tries to be wise above that which is written.

835.—JONATHAN'S GIFT OF HIS OWN ROBES, ETC.

1 Sam. xviii. 4.

In Eastern countries a prince can scarcely bestow a greater mark of his favour than by the gift of some article of his dress, especially if he has already worn it.

In Tavernier's Travels there is a striking history of a lad whom the great Shah Abbas, when out hunting in the mountains, found playing on a pipe as he tended a flock of goats. Struck by the intelligence of his answers, the king took him under his protection, and after employing him in various capacities, ultimately made him nazar, or lord steward of the household. When the king died, the ear of his successor was poisoned with insinuations against the integrity of the nazar, as if he had enriched himself at the expense of the treasures entrusted to him. But on opening the room in which the nazar's dishonest wealth was supposed to be deposited, nothing was found but his shepherd's weeds and sheephook, his pipe, his water-bottle, and the scrip in which he used to put his victuals—all hung up against the wall. The nazar, observing the king's astonishment, said, “When the great Shah Abbas found me in the mountains keeping goats, *these* were all my possessions ; and he took nothing from me. All else, called mine, I owe to his and your bounty, and you may justly reclaim it ; but allow me to retain that which belongs to my original condition, to which I shall now cheerfully return, since I no longer enjoy your confidence.” The king, touched with admiration and remorse, instantly caused himself to be disarrayed of his outer robes, and gave them to the nazar ; “which,” as Tavernier remarks, “is the greatest honour that a king of Persia can bestow upon a subject.”

836.—CEREMONIES ON CERTIFYING THE RECOVERY OF A LEPER.—*Lev. xiii.*

Dr. Geikie gives these in full detail. “A certificate could only be given at Jerusalem, and by a priest.” On the arrival of the man who declared himself to be restored, “a tent had to be pitched outside the city, and in this the priest examined the leper, cutting off all his hair with the utmost care, for if only two hairs were left the ceremony was invalid. Two sparrows had to be brought at this first stage of the cleansing ; the one to be killed over a small earthen pan of water, into

which its blood must drop ; the other, after being sprinkled with the blood of its mate—a cedar twig, to which scarlet wool and a piece of hyssop were bound, being used to do so—was let free in such a direction that it should fly to the open country. After the scrutiny by the priest, the leper put on clean clothes, and carried away those he had worn to a running stream, to wash them thoroughly, and to cleanse himself by a bath. He could now enter the city, but for seven days more could not enter his own house. On the eighth day after, he once more submitted to the scissors of the priest, who cut off whatever hair might have grown in the interval. Then followed a second bath, and now he had only to carefully avoid any defilement, so as to be fit to attend in the Temple next morning, and complete his cleansing. The first step in this final purification was to offer three lambs, two males and a female, none of which must be under a year old. Standing at the outer edge of the court of the men, which he was not yet worthy to enter, the leper waited the longed-for rites. These began by the priest taking one of the male lambs destined to be slain as an atonement for the leper, and leading it to each point of the compass in turn, and by his swinging a vessel of oil on all sides in the same way, as if to present both to the universally present God. He then led the lamb to the leper, who laid his hands on its head, and gave it over as a sacrifice for his guilt, which he now confessed. It was forthwith killed at the north side of the altar, two priests catching its blood—the one in a vessel, the other in his hand. The first now sprinkled the altar with the blood, while the other went to the leper, and anointed his ears, his right thumb, and his right toe with it. The one priest then poured some oil of the leper's offering into the left hand of the other, who, in his turn, dipped his finger seven times into the oil thus held, and sprinkled it as often towards the holy of holies. Each part of the leper which before had been touched with the blood was then further anointed with the oil, what remained being stroked on his head.

“ The leper could now enter the men's court, and did so, passing through it to that of the priests. The female lamb was next killed, as a sin-offering, after he had put his hands on its head, part of its blood being smeared on the horns of the altar, while the rest was poured out at the altar base. The other male lamb was then slain for a burnt sacrifice, the leper once more laying his hands on its head, and the priest sprinkling its blood on the altar. The fat, and all that was

fit for an offering, was now laid on the altar, and burned as a ‘sweet-smelling savour’ to God. A meat-offering of fine wheat-meal and oil ended the whole ; a portion being laid on the altar, while the rest, with the two lambs, of which only a small part had been burned, formed the dues of the priest. It was not till all this had been done that the full ceremony of cleansing, or showing to the priest, had been carried out, and that the cheering words, ‘Thou art pure,’ restored the sufferer once more to the rights of citizenship and of intercourse with men.”

837.—CASTING THE SHOE.—*Psalm cviii. 9.*

These words may refer to the contempt in which Edom was held. The first clause of the verse asserts, “Moab is my wash-pot”; likening Moab to the common and coarse vessel in which a slave washed his master’s feet; and the second clause may allude to the way in which the master, as he prepares for the process of feet-washing, tosses his shoes to his slave.

838.—THE FATAL SIMOON.—*Job xv. 2.*

Colonel Campbell, in his Travels, gives the most vivid description of this fatal wind with which we are acquainted. “It was still the hot season of the year, and we were to travel through that country over which the horrid wind I have before mentioned sweeps its consuming blasts; it is called by the Turks *Sumiel*, is mentioned by the holy Job under the name of the east wind, and extends its ravages all the way from the extreme end of the Gulf of Cambaya up to Mosul; it carries along with it flakes of fire, like threads of silk; instantly strikes dead those that breathe it, and consumes them inwardly to ashes; the flesh soon becoming black as a coal, and dropping off the bones. Philosophers consider it as a kind of electric fire, proceeding from the sulphurous or nitrous exhalations which are kindled by the agitations of the winds. The only possible means of escape from its effects is to fall flat on the ground, and thereby prevent the drawing it in. To do this, however, it is necessary first to see it, which is not always practicable.”

839.—SACRED AND SECULAR JEWISH NAMES.—*Matt. i. ; Luke iii. 23—38.*

The following possible explanation of the divergencies

between the two genealogies of our Lord is deserving of serious consideration :—

“The Jews, like other nations, gave more than one name to each individual. The life of a Jew was essentially twofold : he was a member of a civil state, and he was at the same time a member of a theocracy : his life was both political and religious. This distinction seems to have been preserved in the giving of names. Traces of the double name are found throughout the course of Scripture history, and may be found, under certain modifications, differing in different countries, existing to the present day. A well-informed writer says, in reference to the naming of a Jewish child, “The parents must give it a name, that it may be mentioned at its circumcision. It must be a Hebrew name, and, generally, one adopted in the family, or that of a celebrated man. *This is a sacred name ; and is always made use of in connection with religion.* He may have *another name—a common one*, by giving a Gentile turn to his Hebrew one, or by adopting a Gentile name altogether. For example : his Hebrew name may be *Moshe*, and his common name Moses or Philip. Whenever he is named in the synagogue, or elsewhere connected with any religious duty, he is called by his Hebrew name, but in all other affairs he is called by his common name.”

“It is highly probable that the sacred name imposed at birth would be entered in a different list to the common name by which a man was known in his civil relationships. The former would be registered in infancy at the first presentation before the Lord in the Temple, and would be preserved amongst the sacred documents of the house of the Lord. The latter, entered later in life (2 Chron. xxxvi. 4), or after death, would be preserved amongst the records of the state, or, it may be, would be entered into a private family pedigree. Bishop Hervey, in his work on the *Genealogy of our Lord*, adduces historical evidence to show that both public and private registers were kept among the Jews.

“The conclusion to which we are brought is, that we have before us two such registers, one drawn from public, and the other from private sources ; or, as is conjectered above, one from a civil genealogy, the other from writings laid up in the Temple.

“In support of this view, we may note that in the genealogy in Luke—the evangelist whose opening chapters show a close familiarity with the interior of the Temple, and what took place there—the names appear to have a sacred character. Even an English reader may remark at a glance the different

aspect of the two lists. That in Luke contains with striking frequency the familiar names of distinguished patriarchs, prophets, and priests, and thus confirms the impression that his genealogy, rather than that of Matthew, is of a purely religious character.

"This hypothesis receives a remarkable confirmation by a comparison of the dates of the two lists with the dates of the first building, the destruction, and the second building of the Temple. What, then, is the relation between the two genealogies before Solomon's time, when there was no Temple? and during the lives of Salathiel and Zorobabel, who flourished at the time of the Babylonish captivity, when again, for seventy years, there was no Temple? It is precisely at these periods that only one list exists. *The divergence in Luke's genealogy from that of Matthew is exactly coincident with the periods during which the Temple was standing.* What explanation of this striking fact can be more natural than that at the point where the two genealogies unite there was but one list to refer to, and that the absence of entries in the sacred register required it to be supplemented by a reference to the state chronicles?"

840.—THE POPE AS ANTICHRIST.—*1 John ii. 18.*

It is singular to find that the See of Rome did not receive the appellation of *Antichrist* first from its enemies, the Protestants, but from its own leaders. Gregory himself (A.C. 590) started the idea by declaring that any man who held even the shadow of such power as the Popes arrogated to themselves after his time would be the forerunner of Antichrist. Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, in an invective against John XV. at Rheims (A.C. 991), intimated that a Pope destitute of charity was Antichrist. But the stigma was fixed, in the twelfth century, by Amalric of Bena, and also by the Abbot Joachim (A.C. 1202). Joachim said that the Second Apocalyptic Beast represented some great prelate who will be like Simon Magus, and, as it were, universal Pontiff, and that very Antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks.

Hildebrand was the first pope to whom this ugly label was affixed, but the career of Alexander VI. (Roderic Borgia) made it for ever irremovable for the Protestant mind. There is in the British Museum a volume of caricatures, dated 1545, in which occurs an ingenious representation of Alexander VI. The pope is first seen in his ceremonial robes; but a leaf being raised, another figure is joined to the lower part of the former,

and there appears the papal devil, the cross in his hand being changed into a pitchfork. Attached to it is an explanation in German, giving the legend of the Pope's death. He was poisoned (1503) by the cup he had prepared for another man.

—Conway.

841.—HIDING IN GOD'S TABERNACLE.—*Psalm xxvii. 5.*

This figure of speech is thus illustrated by an Oriental traveller :—

“ We see in the case of David, and in that of many other good men, that they had to conceal themselves often in caves, mountains, and desert places, from the pursuit of their enemies. In countries like these, where the police is imperfect, where population is much scattered, and where it is very easy to sustain life, it can be no wonder that offenders and injured men often conceal themselves for months and years from the vigilance of their pursuers. It is an every-day occurrence to hear of men thus hiding themselves. Has a person to account for his conduct, or to appear in a court of justice ? He packs up his valuables and makes a start into the jungle, or to some distant country. Perhaps he prowls about the skirts of a forest, and occasionally visits his family in the night. See him on his way : he walks so softly that the most delicate-eared animal cannot detect him ; he looks in every direction ; puts his ear near the ground, and listens for any sound ; again he proceeds, sometimes crawling, sometimes walking, till he has reached his hiding-place. But the natives themselves are famous for assisting each other to elude the search of their pursuers, and often, as did Jonathan and Ahimaaz, they conceal themselves in the well. Sometimes an offender will run to a man of rank who is at enmity with his foe, and exclaim, ‘ My lord, you must be my hiding-place against that wicked man, who has committed so many crimes against you.’ ‘ Ah, the good man ! he was my hiding-place ! ’ ”

842.—PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.—*Eph. ii. 2.*

It has long been a widely-conceived notion that demons inhabit the air. The ancients ascribed to directly diabolical action the subtle deaths that struck at them from the air. A single breath of the invisible poison of the air might lay low the strongest. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, says : “ The air is not so full of flies in summer as it is at all times of invisible devils.” This belief was general among the Christian Fathers ; and out of a similar intellectual atmo-

sphere came Paul's representation of one who was the prince of such demons. His may be regarded as "a spiritualisation of the existing aërial demonology."

843.—MIDIAN.—*Exodus* ii. 15.

The following are some of the most interesting discoveries made by Captain Burton on his second expedition to this comparatively unknown Bible district :—

"Details have been brought back 'of an old-new land which the civilised world had clean forgotten ;' ruined cities mentioned by Ptolemy have been identified ; something has been added to our knowledge of the 'Harrahs,' or plutonic centres scattered over the seaboard and the interior ; and due importance is given to the great Wady Hamz, 'the "Land's End" of Egypt, and the most important feature of its kind in North-Western Arabia.' The ruins of numerous ancient towns and settlements, accompanied in almost every instance by slag-heaps, smelting furnaces, and other traces of an old mining industry, have been visited and explored, and a very interesting classical temple, or shrine, has been discovered on the bank of Wady Hamz, and plans and drawings of its details made. Copper was found in North Midian, gold in South Midian, while notices and specimens were brought home 'of three several deposits of sulphur ; of a turquoise-mine, behind Zibá ; of salt and saltpetre, and of vast deposits of gypsum.'

"Captain Burton includes under the name 'Midian' the whole of the Egyptian province which stretches along the coast of Arabia from El 'Akabah, in $29^{\circ} 28'$ N. lat., to Wady Hamz in $25^{\circ} 55' 15''$, N. lat., a distance of about 213 geographical miles. The section above El Muwaylah (Madyan Proper) is named 'North Midian,' and that below it 'South Midian.' The most interesting place examined by the expedition in North Midian was Magháir Shu'ayb, the 'Caves of Jethro,' which is spoken of as an Arab 'Happy Valley,' and identified with the Madiáma of Ptolemy, the ancient capital of the district. The ruins are of considerable extent, and comprise among other remains those of walls, masonry dams, defensive works, cisterns, conduits of cut stone, old watercourses and furnaces. The greater part of the old city was built of alabaster-like material ; 'when new it must have been a scene in fairy-land ; time has now degraded it to the appearance and consistence of crumbling salt.' A large number of coins, Roman and Nabathæan, were found, the

gem of the collection being a copper coin, thinly encrusted with silver, which has been pronounced to be ‘a barbaric Midianitish imitation of the Greek tetradrachm.’ In places the ground is covered with broken pottery and fragments of glass ; and among other finds were pieces of bronze, stone implements, and clay crucibles. In the sides of four small valleys are extensive catacombs with inscriptions or *graffiti*, of which Captain Burton gives copies from squeezes and photographs. Altogether eighteen ruins and twenty *ateliers*, or subsidiary workshops, were seen or heard of in North Midian, including El Hakl and Shuwák, the ’Ağkále and Soáka of Ptolemy, and ’Aymúnah, supposed to be the ‘embarking-place of the coast-section extending from El Muwaylah to Makná.’ Throughout the district there are traces of the mining operations of the ancients, but these do not appear to have been on a very extensive scale. In South Midian, on the other hand, the country has been ‘carefully and conscientiously worked,’ by comparatively modern races. At Umm el Karáyat the quartz-hill of Jebel el Marú shows signs of systematic and civilised work ; at Umm el Haráb there is an open mine ‘scientifically worked by the men of old,’ with the fragments of quartz-crushing implements ; ‘coarse and rough basaltic lava for the first and rudest work ; red granite and syenitic granite for the next stage ; and lastly an admirable hand-mill of the compactest grey granite, smooth as glass and hard as iron.’ At both these places the mines were for gold, and the rock worked was a rosy mauve-coloured schist.

“The ruins in South Midian are very similar in character to those in North Midian, with the exception of the classical shrine or temple Gasr (Kasr) Gurayyim Sa’id on the left bank of Wady Hamz ; this building was constructed of alabaster, and in plan was a square of a little more than eight mètres. No inscription remains to explain the history of this curious ruin ; Mr. Fergusson compares it to the temple of Soueideh in the Haurán, and Captain Burton conjectures that it may have been built by Aelius Gallus. There are numerous mounds scattered over with broken glass and pottery of all kinds, and old reservoirs at El Badá, identified with *Buðātis*, and there are said to be extensive remains, ruins, and catacombs at Madaín Sálih, near Wady el Hamz ; at El Wijh, possibly the Egra of Strabo, the ruins have been buried under modern buildings. A short visit was paid to El Haurá, identified with the Nabathæan port of Leuké Kóme. The town consisted of two quarters, a harbour-town, and a country-

town : the latter ‘ lay upon a long tongue of land backing the slope of the sea-cliff ;’ of the former the only remnant is a Kariz or underground aqueduct which conducted the drainage of Jebel Turham to the sea.”

844.—EASTERN CLOTHES WASHING.—*Neh.* iv. 23.

Probably the fountain in the neighbourhood of a town or village has always been what it now is, the place where all the clothes-washing of the village or town is carried on, and in the East this operation is performed in the open air. The way in which running streams may be used for clothes-washing will be familiar to those who have visited the Seine at Paris, or the Rhone at Geneva. In the East the process is usually as follows : “The matrons set a large kettle or boiler against an old wall or some huge rock, with small stones to steady it underneath, and after washing, spread the clothes to dry upon the surrounding shrubs. Should the village be of any considerable size, the curling smoke is seen rising by the fountain almost every day of the week. Hence this spot is often wholly monopolised by the female portion of the community. Even the passing traveller stops at a respectful distance, and, handing his little brass travelling cup to some romping child who has followed its mother thither, slakes his thirst, and passes on. Sometimes, however, the more provident and more generous villagers prefer to shelter their worthy dames from rain and sunshine while performing duties so indispensable to the general comfort. They put up a rude building, where, screened from the gaze of outsiders, their children can also enjoy occasional ablutions.” An Eastern missionary writes : “We know two considerable cities which possess hot-water springs on their outskirts, where all the washing of the town is done. The spot is crowded all day long with women and children, so that men can visit it only at about sunset, when the women’s work is finished, and they are returning to their homes.”

845.—THE EASTERN SHATIR, OR RUNNER.—*1 Sam.* viii. 11.

In Persia it is to this day a piece of state for the king and other great personages to have several men run on foot before and beside them as they ride on horseback. This they do even when the rider puts his horse to a gallop. The men are trained to their business from boyhood ; and the feats they are able to perform would scarcely be considered credible in this country. They are called *shatirs*. Chardin mentions a

candidate for the place of shatir to the king, who accomplished about 120 miles by fourteen hours' unintermittent running, and who was rather censured for not having done it in twelve hours. Chardin himself followed him on horseback in his seventh course, when the heat of the day had obliged him somewhat to relax his pace, and the traveller could only follow him by keeping his horse on the gallop. It is astonishing to observe the extreme ease with which the men appear to attend their master's horse in all its paces, even the most rapid ; and, as a general rule, it is understood that an accomplished footman ought to remain untired as long or longer than the horse ridden by his master.

846.—WAS THE ART OF WRITING KNOWN IN EGYPT ?
Acts vii. 22.

Much depends on the proof of Moses' ability to write. Those who oppose the authenticity of the Pentateuch affirm that it must have been written later, as the art of writing was not known in Moses' time. Dr. Harold Browne gives the following *résumé* of the arguments in favour of the existence, very early, of writing power in Egypt. Hieroglyphics are as ancient as the earliest Egyptian monuments, and the cursive hieratic character is to be found in monuments, parchments, and papyri centuries before the time of Moses. A few examples will clearly prove this. The famous group of figures in the tomb of Chnoumhotep at Beni Hassan, which belongs to the twelfth dynasty, represents a scribe as presenting to the governor a roll of papyrus covered with an inscription, bearing the date of the sixth year of Osirtasen II. This was certainly many centuries before the Exodus, according to most scholars even before the time of Abraham. At a later period, in the reign of Menephthah I., of the nineteenth dynasty, whom many have identified with the Pharaoh of the Exodus, we have a papyrus in the cursive hieratic character, which gives a list of nine authors distinguished for their writings in theology, philosophy, history, and poetry. But the most remarkable of all is the papyrus found by M. Prisse, written in the hieratic character, and translated by M. Chabas, which contains two treatises ; the first, consisting of twelve pages, is the conclusion of a work of which the earlier part is destroyed. It treats of moral subjects, and is written in an elaborate and elevated style. The second treatise is by a royal author, son of the king next preceding Assa, in whose reign the work was composed. This is considered to be the

most ancient of existing MSS. It is attributed to a prince of the fifth dynasty, who represents himself as weighed down with age, and invokes the aid of Osiris to enable him to give to mankind the fruits of his long experience. The antiquity of this document is incalculable. There can therefore be no reason to doubt that Moses, brought up in the house of Pharaoh, and learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, had acquired the art of writing."

847.—BLINDING DANGEROUS PRISONERS.—*Judges* xvi. 21.

This has been a common and approved mode of treating dangerous prisoners in all ages of the East; and it is done in a great variety of ways—by holding a red-hot iron before the eyes of the unfortunate captive till the moisture is entirely dried up; by piercing the eyeballs with a needle; by forcing them out of the socket by the point of a dagger; by sewing or sealing up the eyelids, or rubbing them over with an application of camphor, which has the effect of destroying the power of vision. Such are the various ways in which this truly Oriental punishment has been inflicted from time immemorial; and it is probable that it was somewhat in this manner that the vengeance of the Philistines was exercised on the unfortunate champion of Israel, his life being spared only that he might contribute the more to the barbarous exultation of his masters.—*Dr. Jamieson.*

848.—ASYLUMS FOR CRIMINALS.—*Joshua* xx. 3.

In Samoa, the manslayer, or the deliberate murderer, flies to the house of the chief of the village, or to the house of the chief of another village to which he is related by the father's or the mother's side. In nine cases out of ten he is perfectly safe if he only remains there. In such instances the chief delights in the opportunity of showing his importance. In Samoa, a chief's house is literally his fortification, except in times of open rebellion and actual war.

849.—THE WORD ASTONIED.—*Isaiah* lii. 14.

This word is the same as our more familiar *astonished*. “Astonied” is used nine times in our Authorised Version, but “astonished” four times as often. The nine times are: Job xvii. 8, xviii. 20; Isa. lii. 14; Jer. xiv. 9; Ezek. iv. 17, ix. 4; Dan. iii. 24, iv. 19, v. 9. These nine cases seem to be passages in which the language is retained from Wicliff’s

version, and from the Geneva Bible. The word appears in various shapes in early writers. Chaucer spells it *astonied*.

" For which this Emelye *astonied* was,
And seide, ' What amounteth this alas ! ' "—*Knight's Tale*, 1503.

Spenser gives it as *astound*.

" The gyant selfe dismaied with that sownd,
* * * * * * *
In hast came rushing forth from inner bowre
With staring countenance sterne, as one *astound*."

In the Genevan Bible the word is *astoined*. Sackville gives the form *stoynde*. In Wicliff we have *stonyng* for astonishment. Milton uses *astonied*, but probably only as an archaism.

Both *astonished* and *astonied* come to us from the Norman French *estonner*, to astonish, amaze, derived from the Latin *attonare*, *attonitus*, to thunder at, to stun. Kindred forms are the Anglo-Saxon *stunian*, to stun ; the German, *erstaunen*, to be astonished ; and the modern French, *étonner*.

850.—TRIAL BY FIRE, ETC.—*Dan.* iii. 15, 20, vi. 16.

The ancient English modes of trial were of two sorts—*fire* ordeal and *water* ordeal, the former being confined to persons of higher rank, the latter to the common people. Fire ordeal was performed either by taking up in the hand unhurt a piece of red-hot iron of one, two, or three pounds' weight, or else by walking barefoot and blindfold over nine red-hot ploughshares, laid lengthwise at unequal distances, and if the party escaped being hurt he was adjudged innocent ; but if it happened otherwise, as without collusion it usually did, he was then condemned as guilty. Water ordeal was performed either by plunging the bare arm up to the elbow in boiling water, and escaping unhurt thereby, or by casting the person suspected into a river or pond of water, and if he floated therein without any action of swimming, it was deemed an evidence of his guilt, but if he sunk he was acquitted. Somewhat similar ordeals were in use among the Greeks and Orientals in very early times. Sophocles describes a suspected person as ready " to handle hot iron and to walk over fire " in order to manifest his innocence ; and the water ordeal is mentioned in connection with Bithynia, Sardinia, and other places. The Indians on the coast of Malabar obliged suspected persons to swim across a large river infested with crocodiles ; if they escaped unhurt they were deemed innocent. In Siam, besides the usual methods of fire and water ordeal, both parties were

sometimes exposed to the fury of a tiger let loose for that purpose, and if the beast spared either, that person was accounted innocent ; if neither, both were held to be guilty. If the animal spared both persons the trial was considered to be incomplete, and another mode of decision was adopted. Such ordeals were doubtless familiar in Daniel's time, and his preservation through the night, in the den of lions, would be considered as conclusive proof of his innocence.

851.—SACRED STONE MONUMENTS.—*Gen. xxviii. 18—22.*

It seems to have been a most ancient custom in Canaan to erect a monument of stone, either quite simple or more elaborate, as the memorial of a place which man gratefully remembered as the spot where he had drawn near to the Divine presence. Sacred monuments of stone formed from early times one of the main peculiarities of Canaan, and of the other regions lying round about the country where the Hebrews and the races allied to them dwelt, and the preference for the purpose of stones remarkable for their strange origin, colour, or form—like the black stone of the Kaaba at Mecca—can only be ascribed to the same cause. Indeed, we can almost follow the whole history of the Palestinian-Syrian religions in the wide difference in the views regarding, and in the application of, such sacred stones. In the primeval days—more than two thousand years before the birth of Christ—when the patriarchs lived, many of the Canaanites may have used a sacred stone as a mere monumental symbol of a god, and consecrated and anointed it, as is related of Jacob.

From those earliest days when the people were still a race of wandering shepherds, there was retained the designation of its God as the “shepherd of the stone of Israel,” with evident allusion to the memorial stone set up at Bethel. Down to the time of David, the many local names compounded with the word *stone*, prove, when taken along with the ancient legends, what a sanctity these stones possessed in the popular estimation. The Phoenicians gave the name of *Bütylos* to an ancient god who had at one time been highly reverenced at Bethel ; and their general name for sacred magic stones was *batylien*. In Israel reverence for stones seems to have declined in the later age, but among the Phoenicians and other heathen, stones became the centres of increasing superstitions, their character varied more and more, and the smaller, round portable ones were regarded as living things, with which men versed in magic liked to practise their art ; but these smaller

magic stones which were moved about in the hand, and at last made to produce sounds by striking, only came into fashion in consequence of a much later art, in the same way as the large and heavy objects of worship, among the heathen now, are diminished to the smallest and most delicate copies.

852.—THIEVES STILL IN THE JERICHO ROAD.—*Luke x. 30.*

Dr. Bonar illustrates the proverbial dangers of the Jericho route by an incident which occurred when he travelled through it with a large party:—

One of the ladies in our company happened to linger a little way behind, at a part of the road where a sharp shoulder of the hill quickly hid her from the rest of the party. In a moment two Bedaween issued from a hollow by the wayside, who, taking hold of her donkey's bridle, tried to lead it aside into the recess out of which they had come. Knowing a little Arabic, she spoke to them and threatened them, but they insisted that she was going wrong, and that they were leading her right. Her donkey-boy too seemed in a moment to become their confederate, and urged her and the donkey off the road. She shouted, but the projecting angle of the hill prevented her being seen or heard. The fellows were proceeding to force, and would have carried her off to their mountain retreat had not one of our number, who had been detained a little by the way, providentially come up. The Bedaween fled when he approached. But the incident was a curious corroboration of old testimonies, and an illustration of the parable already referred to; giving us one proof more, among the many, that our Lord's parables are not only most true to nature, but have actually some well-known fact as their basis.

853.—THE HYSSOP.—*Exod. xii. 22.*

The plant which the Bedouins now call Lasaf, or Lasef, or, according to other pronunciations, Aszef, or Asaf, the caper plant, has been identified with the "hyssop" or *ezob* of Scripture. It is a bright green creeper which climbs out of the fissures of the rocks in the Sinaitic valleys, and from it the green branches were taken that were used for sprinkling the water over the tents of the Israelites. The reasons for identifying the hyssop with this creeper are the following. It is found in Lower Egypt, and in the deserts of Sinai, and so would be brought to the notice of the Israelites in their wilderness journey. Its habit is to grow on the most barren soil, or rocky precipice, or the side of a wall (1 Kings iv. 33).

It has always been supposed to possess cleansing properties, especially in cutaneous disorders (Lev. xiv. 4, 6, 49, 51, 52). It is also capable of yielding a stick, to which a sponge might be affixed (John xix. 29). The word *ussopos* seems to have been used in the Septuagint as the Greek name most nearly resembling in sound the Hebrew *ezob*, though it differs in its sense.

854.—GOOD ASA.—*2 Chron. xiv. 1.*

The character and reign of Asa are little studied by ordinary Bible readers. He is put in the shade by Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah : yet his story is full of points of interest and instruction.

“Asa, grandson of Rehoboam, is noteworthy, first as a religious reformer, and then as the valiant defender of his kingdom against two formidable invasions. His reign was long as well as glorious. He ascended the throne in the closing year of Jeroboam ; he witnessed the brief career of Nadab, the longer reign of Baasha, the hapless course of Elah, the usurpation and speedy death of Zimri, the struggle between Omri and Tibni, the accession of the former to undisputed sovereignty, his life and death, and the commencement of king Ahab’s reign. Strange is the contrast between the convulsions which rent the northern kingdom, and the unbroken prosperity of the southern. The inspired historian assigns the reason : ‘Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.’ Not that he was faultless ; his self-sufficiency, on at least two occasions, is recorded, and sternly blamed : by ‘perfection’ we are to understand steadfastness of attachment to the true faith.

“In all probability Asa was very young when called to reign. Should the view previously given be sustained, that Rehoboam was but twenty-one years old when his youthful indiscretion rent the kingdom in twain, it is clear that now, at the distance of less than twenty years, Rehoboam’s grandson must have been comparatively a child. How his education was conducted we can only conjecture. Abijam, his father, notwithstanding his vices, is shown by his remarkable address recorded in the Chronicles to have been, at least on occasion, a zealous admirer of the Levitical order : it is probable, therefore, on all accounts that the training of the youthful prince was entrusted to the priesthood. We meet also with another court personage, now for the first time appearing in the history, but evidently wielding, as usual in Oriental courts, a special prerogative.

This is the ‘king’s mother ;’ or, in the present instance, more strictly his grandmother, Maachah, the descendant of Absalom. Where polygamy is the habit of the court, the position of king’s wife is precarious ; and she who may prove to have been but the favourite of a season cannot properly be styled ‘the queen.’ This honour therefore naturally belongs to the royal mother, who in some Eastern courts even exercises authority over the king her son. But Maachah was an idolatress after the corrupt Phoenician fashion ; she had made a ‘horror’ (so runs the original) as an object of worship ; and one of the earliest acts of her grandson was to depose her from her queenly dignity. It was an earnest of the stern resolution with which Asa addressed himself to the extirpation of heathen observances from the land of Judah. Of the foul Canaanite idolatries which his fathers had introduced, he made short work. Images and altars were destroyed, and the high places were dismantled. Such, at least, is the declaration of the Chronicles, while from the Kings we learn that with some inconsistency the king allowed those high places which were dedicated to the service of Jehovah to remain ; thus infringing the exclusive claim of Jerusalem to the altar rites. The permission, whether deliberate and politic or only weak, is imputed to Asa as a defect, which did not invalidate the sincerity and truthfulness of his devotion to the God of Israel.”

—Dr. S. Green.

855.—MELCHIZEDEK.—*Gen. xiv. 18.*

Dean Stanley gathers up all that can be known respecting this singular person. He is “one whose name in itself commands respectful awe—Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness. Whence he came, from what parentage, remains untold ; nay, even of what place he was king remains uncertain (for Salem may be either Jerusalem, or the smaller town of which, in after times, the ruins were shown to Jerome, not far from the scene of the interview). He appears for a moment, and then vanishes from our view altogether. It is this which wraps him round in that mysterious obscurity which has rendered his name the symbol of all such sudden, abrupt apparitions, the interruptions, the dislocations, if one may so say, of the ordinary, even, succession of cause and effect and matter of fact in the varied stages of the history of the Church, ‘without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.’ No wonder that in Jewish times he was regarded as some remnant of the earlier world—

Arphaxad or Shem. No wonder that when, in after times, there arose One whose appearance was beyond and above any ordinary influence of time or place or earthly descent, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews could find no fitter expression for this aspect of His character than the mysterious likeness of Melchizedek. But there is enough of interest if we merely confine ourselves to the letter of the ancient narrative. He was the earliest instance of that ancient, sacred, though long-corrupted and long-abused name, not yet disentangled from the regal office, but still of sufficient distinctness to make itself felt : ‘*Priest of the Most High God.*’ That title of Divinity also appears for the first time in history ; and we catch from a heathen author a clue to the spot of the earliest primeval sanctuary where that Supreme Name was honoured with priestly and regal service. Tradition told that it was on Mount Gerizim Melchizedek ministered. On that lofty summit, from Melchizedek even to the present day, where the Samaritans still maintain that ‘on this mountain’ God is to be worshipped, the rough rock, smoothed into a natural altar, is the only spot in Palestine, perhaps in the world, that has never ceased to be the scene of sacrifice and prayer. But what is now the last relic of a local and exhausted, though yet venerable religion, was in those patriarchal times the expression of a wide, all-embracing worship, which comprehended within its range the ancient chiefs of Canaan and the founder of the chosen people. The meeting of the two in the ‘king’s dale’ personifies to us the meeting between what, in later times, has been called Natural and Revealed Religion ; and when Abraham received the blessing of Melchizedek, and tendered to him his reverent homage, it is a likeness of the recognition which true historical faith will always humbly receive and gratefully render when it comes in contact with the older and everlasting instincts of that religion which ‘the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth,’ has implanted in nature and in the heart of man, in ‘the power of an endless life.’”

856.—ANCIENT INK.—*Jer.* xxxvi. 18.

The ink used in ancient times was not so fluid as ours. “Demosthenes reproaches Eschines with labouring in the grinding of ink, as painters do in the grinding of their colours. The substance also found in an inkstand at Herculaneum looks like a thick oil or paint, with which the manuscripts there have been written in a *relievo* visible in the letters when

you hold a leaf to the light in a horizontal direction. Such vitriolic ink as has been used on the old parchment manuscripts would have corroded the delicate leaves of the papyrus, as it has done the skins of the most ancient manuscripts of Virgil and Terence in the Vatican library ; the letters are sunk into the parchment, and some have eaten quite through it, in consequence of the corrosive acid of the vitriolic ink with which they were written."

857.—MAKING OF SUN-DRIED BRICKS.—*Nahum* iii. 14.

A missionary who lived many years in the East gives the following description of the making of sun-dried bricks, and the details are very similar to those given in the pictorial representations upon the Egyptian monuments :—

"A shallow pit is employed for mixing the mud or clay, into which is thrown a suitable amount of fine cut straw. The straw is cut up on the threshing-floor, and the mixing is done with the feet [as intimated in the above passage]. The mud is taken up with the hands or a wooden shovel, and thrown into a hod, which is then carried to the moulder. The latter has previously selected a spot of ground, smooth, bare, and well exposed to the sun, where his bricks will dry quickest. The mould is oblong in form, made of boards, and divided into compartments, each of which will mould a brick about eight inches long by four in width and three in thickness. One of these compartments is often double the size of the rest, turning out a larger brick. The mould is set down upon the ground, and the mud, of the consistency of thick paste, poured into it, and smoothed over with a mason's trowel, or with the palm of the hand. The wooden frame is then carefully taken up, and set down again empty beside the newly-moulded bricks, ready to receive and turn out a new complement of mud. The material employed is not clay, but simply moistened earth. The bricks are often cemented with the same material in place of mortar, and walls so built are easily worn away by the action of the rains. When, however, united with lime cement, and daubed on the outside with the same material, they are very enduring."

Straw is only mixed with the clay, or earth, for sun-dried bricks, so we may presume that Israel in Egypt made this particular kind (*Exod.* v. 6—8).

858.—NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S BAND OF MUSICIANS.—*Dan.* iii. 5.

The musical instruments enumerated in the above text are mostly still in use at the present time in the East ; yet some

of them have become obsolete. The cornet is a brass trumpet manufactured in the country, and used in martial music. The harp is no longer in use, nor the "psaltery," which is a smaller instrument of the same kind ; they have been replaced by the ood, which gives a richer sound, and is more portable. The "sackbut" is a tamboora, and the "dulcimer" a kanoon, or santür. Music is mostly cultivated and performed by those who make it their profession and means of living, though many of them pursue some other calling at the same time. They go about two or three together on great festival days, like the Bariam of the Muslims, and Easter or Christmas with the Christians, and perform at the doors of the rich, receiving a present of money or food. Their instruments are usually a naij, accompanied by a tambourine, or a kemenjeh, and a tamboora ; in the country districts they perform on a zoornâ and a drum, or a zummarah and a darabukkeh. These are not regular performers, but beggars. The professionals may be heard at a public *café*, where they are hired by the cafejys in order to attract customers ; but they chiefly depend upon the patronage of the rich on occasions of special festivities. Some wealthy people, however, engage them at their houses evening after evening, and almost always entertain company. A band of musicians, when complete, usually comprises the following instruments : a kemenjeh ; a naij, or a double flute ; a tamboora, or ood ; a kanoon, or santür ; and sometimes a darabukkeh, the number being increased by doubling either or the whole. They usually accompany their performances with the voice, one of them at least being a singer. This latter is commonly a young lad. He carries the solos, while the rest of the band join in the choruses.—*Bible Customs in Bible Lands.*

859.—TRADITION CONNECTED WITH THE RUINS OF NIMROUD.—*Gen. x. 9, 10.*

Awad, a sheik of the Jehesh tribe of Arabs, entertained Mr. Layard with the following story, which is found in a work which the Arabs are fond of reading during the winter nights, called *Kusset el Nimroud* (Stories of Nimrod) :—“The palace was built by Athur, the Kiayah, or lieutenant, of Nimrod. Here the holy Abraham (peace be with him !) cast down and brake in pieces the idols which were worshipped by the unbelievers. The impious Nimrod, enraged at the destruction of his gods, sought to slay Abraham, and waged war against him. But the prophet prayed to God, and said, ‘Deliver me,

O God, from this man, who worships stones, and boasts himself to be the lord of all beings.' And God said to him, 'How shall I punish him?' And the prophet answered, 'To Thee armies are as nothing, and the strength and power of men likewise. Before the smallest of Thy creatures they will perish.' And God was pleased at the faith of the prophet, and He sent a gnat, which vexed Nimrod night and day, so that he built himself a roof of glass in yonder palace, that he might dwell therein, and shut out the insect. But the gnat entered also, and passed by his ear into his brain, upon which it fed, and increased in size day by day, so that the servants of Nimrod beat his head with a hammer continually, that he might have some ease from his pain : but he died, after suffering these torments for four hundred years."

860.—JEWISH FEELING CONCERNING PUBLICANS.
Luke v. 27.

"Capernaum, as a busy trading town, on the marches between the dominions of Philip and those of Antipas, and from its being on the high road between Damascus and Ptolemais, had a strong staff of custom-house officers, or publicans. The traffic landed at Capernaum from across the Lake, or shipped from it, had to pay dues, and so had all that entered or left the town in other directions. There were tolls on the highways and on the bridges, and at each place the humbler grades of publicans were required, while a few of a higher rank had charge of the aggregate receipts of the minor offices of the district. These officials were often freemen, or even slaves of the larger farmers of the local imposts ; sometimes natives of the part, and even poor Roman citizens. The whole class, however, had a bad name for greed and exaction. So loud, indeed, and serious did the remonstrances of the whole Roman world become at the tyranny and plundering thus suffered, that, a generation later, Nero proposed to the Senate to do away with taxes altogether, though the idea resulted only in an official admission that 'the greed of the publicans must be repressed, lest they should at last, by new vexations, render the public burdens intolerable.' The underlings, especially, sought to enrich themselves by grinding the people ; and the checks they caused to commerce, the trouble they gave by reckless examination of goods and by tedious delays, by false entries and illegal duties, made them intensely hated. 'Bears and lions,' said a proverb, 'might be the fiercest wild beasts in the forests, but publicans and informers were the worst in

the cities.' The Jews, who bore the Roman yoke with more impatience than any other nation, and shunned all contact with foreigners, excommunicated every Israelite who became a publican, and declared him incompetent to bear witness in their courts; and the disgrace extended to his whole family. Nobody was allowed to take alms from one, or to ask him to change money for them. They were even classed with highway robbers and murderers, or with harlots, heathen, and sinners. No strict Jew would eat, or even hold intercourse, with them."—*Geikie.*

861.—THE OAK AND THE TEREBINTH TREES.

2 Sam. xviii. 9.

These trees are quite distinct, though often confounded together by the translators of our Bible. Both trees still flourish in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor; both are large trees, affording a refreshing shade; both are planted singly in centres of villages or in the outskirts, and both are favourite places of general resort. But the form of the trunk of the terebinth is more regular than that of the oak, although of the two the bark of the former is more rough. The out-spreading branches of the terebinth begin higher up than those of the oak, and its leaves are a regular oval, of a somewhat deep green, but not so glossy. The chief differences may, however, be noticed in the fruit of the two trees; for, in place of the acorn produced by the oak, the terebinth produces a fruit the size of a small pea, and, in the case of one variety, four times as large. It consists of a white shell, holding an oily pulp, and contained in a bluish green pellicle. The fruit grows in clusters from short stems, and, in some places, where the tree is abundant, oil is extracted from the berries by crushing them like olives. The familiar acorn-bearing oak does not need description.

Two Hebrew words, *alah* and *allou*, are translated oak. There is good reason for thinking that *allou* is the true name for the oak, and *alah* should be reserved for the terebinth. This, however, is contested by many students of Bible natural history.

Dr. Thomson says: "The terebinth is deciduous, and therefore not a favourite shade-tree. It is very rarely planted in the courts of houses, or over tombs, or in the places of resort in the villages. It is the beautiful evergreen oak that you find there. Beyond a doubt, the idolatrous groves so often mentioned in Hebrew history were of oak. The straggling,

naked terebinth is never selected for such purposes. It sheds down no soft twilight, suggests no religious thought, awakens no superstitious fears. It takes the dense, solemn, mysterious oak to do this. I confess that I never come within such a grove without being conscious of a certain indescribable spell, a sort of silly timidity, tending strongly to religious reverence. With the ignorant this might easily be deepened into downright idolatry."

The precise kind of tree in which Absalom was caught can hardly be decided, as the Hebrew word used is *alah*, which should mean *a terebinth*, only there are no terebinth-woods in the country.

862.—IMPORTANCE OF WELL-DIGGING IN THE EAST. *Gen. xxvi. 15, 18—22.*

Wells, dug at great expense, were regarded as very valuable possessions. Isaac was a great well-digger, prompted thereto by the necessities of his vast flocks; and in those days this was an operation of such expense and difficulty as to be mentioned among the acts which rendered illustrious even kings. The strife for possession of them was a fruitful source of annoyance to the peaceful patriarch, as it had been the cause of separation between Abraham and Lot before him; and such contests are now very common all over the country, but more especially in these southern deserts. It was the custom in former times to erect towers or castles to command and secure the possession of valuable watering-places; thus Uzziah built towers in connection with "his many wells." And to stop up wells was the most pernicious and destructive species of vengeance,—the surest way to convert a flourishing country into a frightful wilderness. Israel was commanded thus to destroy the land of the Moabites, by stopping all the wells of water (2 Kings iii. 19, 25).

863.—THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES.—*Gen. xi. 9.*

In the Land of Shinar a tradition has been preserved that is very like the Biblical record of this remarkable event. It is given thus: "The earth was still of one language, when the primitive men, who were proud of their strength and stature, and despised the gods as their inferiors, erected a tower of vast height, in order that they might mount to heaven. And the tower was now near to heaven, when the gods caused the winds to blow, and overturned the structure upon the men,

and made them speak with divers tongues, wherefore the city was called Babylon."

The following valuable note is taken from the *Speaker's Commentary*: "It is worthy of remark, that, though the descendants of Shem and Japheth shared in the judgment which confounded the tongues, yet their dialects have to this day a nearer resemblance between themselves than those which may perhaps be attributed to the children of Ham. As the Shemites and Japhethites have had a higher civilisation, so they have retained a purer language. The Semitic dialects all have a strong family likeness. The Aryan or Indo-European (*i.e.*, probably the Japhetic) dialects, though more diverse than the Semitic, are yet all easily assignable to a common origin; whilst the Turanian and other languages branch off into endless varieties."

864.—JEWISH THOUGHTS ABOUT WINE.—*John ii. 3.*

Dr. Geikie collects a number of Jewish parables and proverbs respecting the use of wine. As in all wine-growing countries, the population of Canaan was temperate in its use. Wine was their symbol of joy and festivity. "Jotham, in the far-back days of the judges, had praised it as 'cheering God and man,' and, among other passages, a Psalm had spoken of it as 'making glad the heart,' though its immoderate use had been condemned in many Scriptures. 'Wine is the best of all medicines,' said a Hebrew proverb, 'where wine is wanting doctors thrive.' 'May there be always wine and life in the mouth of the Rabbi,' was one of the toasts at their festivities. But, withal, this referred only to its moderate use. Among the parables in which the people delighted, one ran thus: 'When Noah planted his vineyard, Satan came and asked him what he was doing? 'Planting a vineyard,' was the reply. 'What is it for? 'Its fruits, green or dry, are sweet and pleasant; we make wine of it, which gladdens the heart.' 'I should like to have a hand in the planting,' said Satan. 'Good,' replied Noah. Satan then brought a lamb, a lion, a sow, and an ape, killed them in the vineyard, and let their blood run into the roots of the vines. From this it comes that a man, before he has taken wine, is simple as a lamb, which knows nothing, and is dumb before its shearers; when he has drunk moderately he grows a lion, and thinks there is not his like; if he drink too much, he turns a swine, and wallows in the mire; if he drink still more he becomes a

filthy ape, falling hither and thither, and knowing nothing of what he does."

865.—A CAKE NOT TURNED.—*Hosea vii. 8.*

The simplest form of the oven is that of a hole dug in the earth ; the sides being coated with clay, and the bottom laid with pebbles. The bread is placed against the sides, and is soon prepared. A rougher way still was to kindle a fire and let it burn fiercely, then to clear away the embers and lay the cake on the heated spot, covering them up again with the hot ashes which had just been removed. The Bedouin of the present day usually follow this rude method. Cakes so prepared are named ash-cakes in the original, are often referred to, and are called in our version "cakes upon the hearth" (Gen. xviii. 6). Compare 1 Kings xix. 6. In a ruder way still, the cakes were sometimes put between smouldering layers of dung (Ezek. iv. 12, 15). In all these processes care was specially taken to turn the cake every few minutes, lest it should be spoiled. The prophet's complaint is, "Ephraim is a cake not turned ;" that is, burnt to ashes, and wholly useless, —a result which, from carelessness, must have often happened.

866.—MIGRATIONS OF ARAB TRIBES.—*Gen. xiii. 18.*

Layard tells of witnessing the removal of a tribe to new pasture-grounds, and his description will aid us in realising the similar scenes in the life of the great patriarchs :—

"When we reached the summit (of the hill) we looked down upon a plain, which appeared to swarm with moving objects. We had come upon the main body of the Shammar. It would be difficult to describe the appearance of a large tribe when migrating to new pastures. We soon found ourselves in the midst of wide-spreading flocks of sheep and camels. As far as the eye could reach, to the right, to the left, and in front, still the same moving crowd. Long lines of asses and bullocks laden with black tents, huge cauldrons and variegated carpets ; aged women and men, no longer able to walk, tied on the heap of domestic furniture ; infants crammed into saddle bags, their tiny heads thrust through the narrow opening, balanced on the animal's back by kids or lambs tied on the opposite side ; young girls clothed only in the close-fitting Arab shirt, which displayed rather than concealed their graceful forms ; mothers with their children on their shoulders ; boys driving flocks of lambs ; horsemen, armed with their long tufted spears, scouring the plain on their fleet mares ; riders

urging their dromedaries with their short hooked sticks, and leading their high-bred steeds by the halter ; colts galloping amongst the throng ; high-born ladies seated in the centre of huge wings, which extend like those of a butterfly from each side of the camel's hump, and are no less gaudy and variegated. Such was the motley crowd through which we had to wend our way for several hours."

867.—A REAL MODERN LEPER.—*Mark i. 40.*

"We left our encamping ground on Wadi Gerur at 8.50. At 7 o'clock a strong wind began to blow from the west, bringing along with it a thick mist, which obscured all the surrounding mountains, and continued during the greater part of the day, greatly limiting our view. I had set out on foot before the kafileh got in motion, and was about a mile in advance, when a Bedouin, apparently about fifty, came running toward me, and after exchanging the usual salaams, sat down under a retem bush, and beckoned me to do the same. I declined, showing him by signs that I was going on before my party. He then told me he had come as a patient, and drawing up his garment so as to expose his leg from the hip downwards, lo ! he was a leper, as white as snow. I often afterwards saw in Jerusalem, Nablous, and Damascus the poor creatures who now go by the name of lepers, and whose disease seems to resemble elephantiasis ; but this case was altogether different. There was no enlargement of the joints or disfigurement of the shape of the limb ; it was the veritable leprosy of Scripture, and the literal and appropriate description of the flesh is white as snow. The disease had not yet spread over the whole thigh, though very nearly so ; but where it extended the flesh was as white as the paper on which I write ; and the contrast between the parts thus affected and the dark bronze colour of the healthy skin around was very striking, especially where the latter was disappearing under the advancing disease. It was only a few months, he said, since the malady had begun. I shook my head, and told him I could do nothing for him. The poor fellow no longer objected to my proceeding on my journey ; and when I looked back a few minutes after, he was running back toward the black tents of his people a disappointed man."—*Dr. Stewart's The Tent and Khan.*

868.—CURIOUS KIND OF TORCH.—*Judges vii. 16, 20.*

The sudden bursting out of the flames from Gideon's torches may receive illustration, if not explanation, from a singular

kind of torch used by the police at Cairo, and called "shealeh." It burns without a flame, except when waved through the air, which causes it at once to burst into a blaze. Its burning end is covered with a small earthen jar, or "pitcher," and it thus answers the purpose of a dark lantern; but experienced thieves are set upon their guard by the small light it emits. Both Lane and Bruce describe this torch.

869.—MOURNING FOR THE DEAD.—*Matt. ix. 23.*

"I joined the mourners on the third day. Directly I entered the house, I heard the minstrels and the loud cries of the people. I was led into a large long room. Women were sitting on the floor in rows on two sides of it. An open space was left down the middle to the end of the room, where the widow sat apart, with her two youngest children lying at her feet. Her hair was dishevelled, and she wore no covering on her head. Her eyelids were swollen with weeping, and her face pale with watching. She looked as if she had suddenly grown old. Her dress was rent and disordered. She had not rested or changed her garments since she heard the tidings of her husband's death. She kissed me passionately, and said, 'Weep for me, he is dead;' and then, pointing to her children, she said, 'Weep for them, they are fatherless.' I sat near to her. One of her children, who was about three years old, crept into my lap, and whispered, 'My father is dead.' Then he closed his eyes, and pressed his chubby little fingers tightly over them, saying, 'My father is dead like this—he is in the dark.' The wailing, which had been slightly interrupted at my entrance, was renewed with vigour. The assembled women were all in their gayest dresses—soft crimson silk with white stripes on it prevailing. There were many women from Nazareth, and Shefa 'Amer, and other villages. They had uncovered their heads and unbraided their hair. They looked dreadfully excited. Their eyes were red with weeping and watching. The air of the room was close and heated, for the widow and chief mourners had remained there for three days and two nights without rest, receiving guests who came to mourn with them. The room was always filled, for as soon as one set of people left another set came in. During my visit there were seventy-three mourners present, without reckoning the children who glided in and out. Three rows of women sat on the matted floor on the right-hand side, facing three rows on the left. They were all clapping their hands or striking their bosoms in time with the monotonous melody which they

murmured. Presently an especial lamentation was commenced, to which I was invited to respond. I was still seated at the end of the room, near to the widow. The women on my left hand, led by a celebrated professional mourner, sang these words with vigour and energy :—

“ We saw him in the midst of the company of riders,
Riding bravely on his horse, the horse he loved ! ”

Then the women on the opposite side of the room answered in a lower and more plaintive key, beating their breasts mournfully :—

“ Alas ! no more shall we see him
In the midst of the company of riders,
Riding bravely on his horse, the horse he loved.”

Then the first singers sang :—

“ We saw him in the garden, the pleasant garden,
With his companions, and his children, the children he loved.”

Then the second singers answered :—

“ Alas ! no more shall we see him
In the garden, the pleasant garden.
With his companions, and his children, the children he loved.”

Chorus of all the women, singing softly :—

“ His children and his servants blessed him !
His home was the shelter of happiness !
Peace be upon him ! ”

First singers, loudly and with animation :—

“ We saw him giving food to the hungry,
And clothing to the naked.”

Second singers, softly and plaintively :—

“ Alas ! no more shall we see him
Give food to the hungry,
And garments to the naked ! ”

First singers :—

“ We saw him give help and succour to the aged,
And good counsel to the young.”

Second singers :—

“ Alas ! no more shall we see him
Give help and succour to the aged,
And good counsel to the young.”

Chorus of all the women, singing softly :—

“ He suffered not the stranger to sleep in the streets ;
He opened his door to the wayfarer.
Peace be upon him ! ”

After this they started to their feet, and shrieked as loudly as

they could, making a rattling noise in their throats for three or four minutes. The widow knelt, swaying her body backwards and forwards, and feebly joined in the wild cry. Some of the women reseated themselves on the floor, quite exhausted, some retired, and a number of guests from 'Akka came in and took the vacant places. A minstrel woman began slowly beating a tambourine, and all the company clapped their hands in measure with it, singing : "Alas for him ! alas for him ! He was brave, he was good ! alas for him !" Then three women rose, with naked swords in their hands, and stood at two or three yards' distance from each other. They began dancing with slow and graceful movements, with their swords at first held low and their heads drooping. Each dancer kept within a circle of about a yard in diameter. By degrees the tambourine and the clapping of the hands and the songs grew louder, the steps of the dancers were quickened. They threw back their heads, and gazed upwards passionately, as if they would look into the very heavens. They flourished their uplifted swords ; and as their movements became more wild and excited, the bright steel flashed, and bright eyes seemed to grow brighter. As one by one the dancers sank overcome with fatigue, others rose to replace them. Thus passed seven days and nights. Professional mourners were in constant attendance to keep up the excitement, and dances and dirges succeeded each other, with intervals of wild and hysterical weeping and shrieking. I remained about two hours in the room, and occasionally I watched from a window which overlooked it. I could see that the leader had a powerful influence over all present. A certain tone of her wild wailing voice drew tears from the eyes, and produced hysterical emotion in some cases. There are girls who have a morbid taste for the excitement thus produced, and are celebrated for the facility with which they fall into fits of uncontrollable weeping. The real mourners and the amateur actresses in these scenes are usually ill afterwards, but the professional assistants do not appear to suffer from the fatigue or excitement, and they do not lose their self-control for a moment."—*Rogers' Domestic Life in Palestine.*

870—ENERGETIC RACES COMING FROM THE NORTH.
Psalm lxxv. 6 ; Jer. i. 9.

In the following very striking passage from Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. iii., the way in which the effete nations of the plains have been, again and again, swept away by energetic

races from the hills, is finely set forth. “‘I have made completely strong the defences of Babylon,’ said Nebuchadnezzar, in his great inscription, ‘may it last for ever!’ Not so. The prescient eye of the Hebrew Prophets was clearly fixed on that point of the horizon whence the storm would issue. There was a mightier wall even than the walls of Babylon, with gates which could not be opened and shut at the command of princes, that runs across the centre of the whole Ancient World; the backbone alike of Europe and Asia. It begins in the far East with the Himalayas; it attaches itself to the range of the diverging lines of the Zagros and Elburz ranges; it unites them in the Imaus, the Caucasus, and the Taurus; it reappears after a slight interruption in the range of Hœmus; it melts into the Carpathian and Ityrian Mountains; it rises again in the Alps; it reaches its western buttress in the Pyrenees.

“On the southern side, on the sunny slopes of this gigantic barrier grew up the civilised nations of antiquity, the ancient monumental religions and politics of India, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, as afterwards further west, the delicate yet powerful commonwealths of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. On the northern or darker side, behind this mighty screen, were restrained and nurtured the fierce tribes which have from time to time descended to scourge or to regenerate the civilisation of the South. Such in later days have been the Gauls, the Goths, the Vandals, the Huns, the Tartars; such, more nearly within the view of the age of which we are now speaking, the Scythians; and such was now, although in a somewhat milder form, the enemy on whom—as Tacitus in the days of Trajan already fixed his gaze with mingled fear and admiration on the tribes of Germany—the Israelite Prophets looked for the development of the new crisis of the world. Already the Psalmist had seen that neither in the East nor West nor South, but in the North was the seat of future change. Already Ezekiel had been startled by the vision of the wild Nomads pouring over the hills that had hitherto parted them from their destined prey. And now Jeremiah, and it may be some older Prophet, heard yet more distinctly the gathering of war—an assembly of great nations against Babylon from the north country, with the resistless weapons for which all those races were famous.

“And now yet more nearly the Great Unnamed points not only to the north, but to the eastern quarter of the north. Already on ‘the bare hill-top’ a banner was raised and the

call was gone forth ; there was a rushing sound as of multitudes in the distant mountain valleys ; the shriek of alarm went up from the plains ; the faces of the terrified dwellers in Mesopotamia were lit up with a lurid glow of fear.

“It was the mighty race which occupied the table-land between the two mountain ranges of Zagros and Elburz, of which we have just spoken—the Median and Persian tribes now just rising into importance. That nation whose special education was to ride on horses, to shoot with the bow, and to speak the truth, was now in full march against no less a prey than Babylon itself.”

871.—WATERPOTS OF STONE.—*John ii. 6.*

“The ruins of a church,” says Dr. Clarke in his *Travels*, “are shown in this place (Cana of Galilee), which is said to have been erected over the spot where the marriage feast of Cana was celebrated. It is worthy of notice that, walking among these ruins, we saw large massy *stone* waterpots, answering to the description given of the ancient vessels of the country ; not preserved, or exhibited as relics, but lying about disregarded by the present inhabitants, as antiquities with whose original use they were unacquainted. From their appearance, and the number of them, it is quite evident that a practice of keeping water in large *stone* pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons, was once common in the country.”

872.—UR OF THE CHALDEES.—*Gen. xi. 31.*

Whilst Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Assyria were unexplored, the greatest uncertainty was felt respecting many places and events mentioned in the Bible ; but since those countries have yielded up their brick and stone literature a flood of light has been poured upon the Scripture history. Ur of the Chaldees is full of interest to the Bible student and the archaeologist from the fact that it was the early home of Abraham, who migrated from thence with his father’s family. There appears to be good reason for identifying the ancient Ur with the modern Mugheir, near the mouth of the Euphrates. The excavations conducted there have brought to light the name of *Uruk*, which seems to have been borne by a very ancient king of that region. The basement platforms of all the most ancient buildings all through the entire region were built by this king, who calls himself in the inscriptions on the bricks King Ur, and also King of Accad. Professor Rawlinson

considers that he was the immediate successor of Nimrod, or at least the oldest king after the great hunter of whose works any fragments at present remain. His bricks are of a rude and coarse make, and the inscriptions are marked by the most primitive simplicity. His substitute for lime and mortar was either wet mud, or bitumen, and the bricks are for the most part ill set. The language of the inscriptions belongs to the Hamitic class, and on one of the bricks occurs the inscription, "Uruk, King of Ur, He is the builder of the Temple of the Moon God." It is chiefly as a builder of enormous structures that Uruk is known; it is calculated that he used up no less than 30,000,000 square bricks in the construction of one building alone. Considering the number and extent of his works it appears certain that, like most great monarchs, Uruk was a conqueror who enslaved millions by the power of the sword, and compelled the captives to toil in the erection of his vast buildings. It may be further noticed that his erections are carefully placed with the angles facing the four cardinal points of the compass, and that they were dedicated to the Sun, or Moon, to Belus, Bel, Nimrod, or Beltis. Rawlinson places the date of Uruk's reign in the time of Terah, the father of Abraham. The gods of Uruk would be Abraham's gods, and he may have worshipped in those massive temples, for we know that his father "served other gods;" and Abraham's devotion to the One God we must suppose to have been the personal decision of his riper years.

873.—THORNS CUT UP.—*Isa. xxxiii. 12.*

Dr. Thomson illustrates this expression thus:—"Here, on the brow of this rocky hill, we have the lime-kilns, and men in the very act of breaking up sarcophagi to feed them. It is unpardonable sacrilege thus to destroy those venerable antiquities. It is outrageous Vandalism. Instead of hurling anathemas at these barbarians, we had better drop a tear of compassion over such ignorance, and then see if we cannot draw some lesson of instruction from even these destructive kilns. You see an immense quantity of this low, matted thorn-bush collected around them. That is the fuel with which the lime is burned. And thus it was in the days of Isaiah. 'The people,' says he, 'shall be as the burnings of lime: *as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.*' Those people among the rocks yonder are cutting up thorns with their mattocks and pruning-hooks, and gathering them into bundles to be burned in these burnings of lime. It is a curious

fidelity to real life, that, when the thorns are merely to be destroyed, they are never cut up, but set on fire where they grow. They are only *cut up* for the lime-kiln."

874.—THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF NOAH'S ARK.—*Gen. vi. 15.*

Van Lennep points out that the name *tarah*, in the original Hebrew, is the same as that rendered *Kibotos*, a chest, in the Greek of both the Old and New Testaments. He thinks it probable that Noah's Ark was a large floating-house, thirty feet in height by fifty in breadth, and about five hundred feet long, built of the wood of the wild cypress (gopher), which grows upon all the high mountains of Western Asia, and particularly of Armenia. This wood is of the same enduring nature as the cedar. But the name gopher has been applied to other trees, some of which may have yielded the "pitch" with which the ark was pitched within and without. It does not appear that the ark was intended for sailing, only for floating, and it would merely drift by the currents to new positions.

Tradition agrees with this description. Van Lennep describes the city of Apamea, in Asia Minor, as built at the foot of a high mountain, on which the inhabitants say that Noah's Ark rested. They, therefore, call their city "Apamea of the Ark," to distinguish it from other cities of the same name. "Several coins are still extant of this city, struck by Alexander Severus, Macrinus, or Philip, representing two persons in an ark which rests upon a rock surrounded by water: a bird is seen flying with a branch in its claws, and another rests on the ark. A man and a woman stand in front, with their right hands raised. On the ark is the Greek word NOE (Noah)."

875.—POWER ON THE HEAD.—*1 Cor. xi. 10.*

Many conjectures have been made as to the meaning of this expression—"have power on her head because of the angels?" Some, in desperation, would change the word rendered "power" into something else. It is probable that the sense is, that the married women in the Christian assemblies should wear a hood or veil, in token of subjection to their husbands. The word "power" cannot of itself mean a veil; but it may refer to it as a symbol; for the bride wore a *peplum*, veil or shawl on her head, or thrown over it, at her marriage, as if it characterised the subordinate relation to her husband which she was henceforward to occupy. This meaning is the more likely, as the apostle has said in verses 5, 6, 7: "Every woman

that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man.” The women in Corinth, under the impression, perhaps, that through the Gospel the sexes had become equal in everything, seem to have uncovered their heads in the devotional services of the church. The apostle guards against this practice—the original law of subjection is not repealed : “She was a helpmeet for him,”—“the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.” The covering of the head, therefore, symbolised in some way this original relation of dependence, the “man being the image and glory of God, but the woman the glory of the man ; for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man.”—*Eadie.*

876.—SATAN AND AHRIMAN.—*Zech.* iii. 1, 2.

The Hebrew Satan, and the Persian *Ahriman*, have sometimes been confounded together, but in all the Scripture representations of this malignant spirit, it is clearly set forth that he is altogether subject to God, and acts only permissively; by his acts bringing the cause of truth into stronger relief. On the other hand *Ahriman* is, at least, in the later Persian religion, a sovereign, independent, and antagonistic god. There is, however, great danger of the uneducated giving independent existence and authority to Satan, and so constituting him, to their minds, a rival God.

877.—MODERN DRINKING CUSTOMS IN EGYPT.—*Isaiah* v. 12.

“Though we read in some of the delightful tales of ‘The Thousand and One Nights’ of removing ‘the table of viands,’ and bringing ‘the table of wine,’ this prohibited beverage is not often introduced in general society, either during or after the meal, or at other times, by the Muslims of Egypt in the present day. Many of them, however, habitually indulge in drinking wine with select parties of their acquaintance. The servants of a man, who is addicted to this habit, know such of his friends as may be admitted, if they happen to call when he is engaged in this unlawful pleasure ; and to all others they say that he is not at home, or that he is in the harem. Drinking wine is indulged in by such persons before and after

supper, and during that meal ; but it is most approved *before* supper, as they say that it quickens the appetite. ‘The table of wine’ is usually thus prepared, according to a penitent Muslim wine-bibber, who is one of my friends (I cannot speak on this subject from my own experience ; for, as I never drink wine, I have never been invited to join a Muslim wine-party) :—A round japanned tray, or a glass dish, is placed on the stool before mentioned. On this are generally arranged two cut-glass jugs, one containing wine, and the other rosoglio ; and sometimes two or more bottles besides : several small glasses are placed with these ; and glass saucers of dried and fresh fruits, and, perhaps, pickles : lastly, two candles, and often a bunch of flowers stuck in a candlestick, are put upon the tray. The Egyptians have various kinds of sherbets, or sweet drinks. The most common kind is merely sugar and water, but very sweet : lemonade is another : a third kind, the most esteemed, is prepared from a hard conserve of violets, made by pounding violet-flowers, and then boiling them with sugar : this violet-sherbet is of a green colour : a fourth kind is prepared from mulberries : a fifth, from sorrel. There is also a kind of sherbet sold in the streets which is made with raisins, as its name implies ; another kind, which is a strong infusion of liquorice-root, and called by the name of that root ; and a third kind which is prepared from the fruit of the locust-tree, and called in like manner by the name of the fruit. The sherbet is served in covered glass cups, generally called ‘kullehs,’ containing about three-quarters of a pint ; some of which (the more common kind) are ornamented with gilt flowers, etc. The sherbet-cups are placed on a round tray, and covered with a round piece of embroidered silk, or cloth of gold. On the right arm of the person who presents the sherbet is hung a large oblong napkin, with a wide embroidered border of gold and coloured silks at each end. This is ostensibly offered for the purpose of wiping the lips after drinking the sherbet ; but it is really not so much for use as for display : the lips are seldom or scarcely touched with it.”—*Lane's Modern Egyptians.*

878.—THE OAK GROVE OF MAMRE.—*Gen. xviii. 1.*

In the English version it is said that Abraham, at the time he entertained the angels, dwelt in the “plains” of Mamre ; but the word translated “plain” means some kind of grove or tree ; and the passage should read “dwelt in the oak-grove of Mamre ;” or “under the oak of Mamre ;” or perhaps “under

the terebinth-tree of Mamre." It has been supposed that it was one particular terebinth under which Abraham showed the hospitality to his celestial visitors; and that the same tree was still standing several centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. A curious old legend declares that Abraham's tree grew out of the staff which one of the angels fixed in the ground while partaking of the patriarch's hospitality. The staff, being left in the soil, took root, and became a great tree. On one occasion, it is said, the tree was set on fire, when the flame seized it suddenly, and enveloped it completely, but as soon as the fire was extinguished, the tree was found as whole and sound as before.

879.—LEPROSY IN ENGLAND AND EUROPE.—*Lev.* xiii

Many imagine leprosy to be some obscure disease alluded to only in the Bible. Leprosy was also a disease of the Middle Ages, more widely spread and more fearful in its results than any other in ancient or modern times. It is probable that the worst form of leprosy in early Jewish history was that now known as *elephantiasis*. The milder form of Jewish leprosy, called *bohak*, was neither severe nor contagious.

Leprosy in England and Europe arose gradually after the destruction of the Roman Empire, as fast as barbarism spread with its uncleanness of personal habits, and its resort to animal food and beer as nearly exclusive articles of daily diet. In all ancient towns it was early found necessary to erect hospitals and retreats and churches for those afflicted with leprosy. We have in England, now, hospitals built for lepers, so ancient that their origin is unknown—such as the St. Bartholomew Hospital at Gloucester, and others. It is known that there were at least 9,000 hospitals in Europe for leprosy alone. Louis VII. of France left legacies to over 2,000 hospitals for lepers in his country. We have extant a touching account of a knight of vast wealth and influence, named Amiloun, expelled from his castle to be a beggar, almost in sight of his vast possessions and stately home; for the Normans in France virtually outlawed, as well as expelled from their homes, all lepers, and, as soon as their influence was established in England, they extended their sanitary measures and benevolent enterprise to lepers.

Hugo, or Eudo, Dapifer—the steward for William the Conqueror—having received from him vast possessions in land in Essex, built, or rebuilt, and endowed a St. Mary Magdalen Hospital for lepers in Colchester. The hospital for lepers,

dedicated to the same saint, in the city of Exeter, is of unknown antiquity. Bartholomew, bishop of that city and diocese (1161-1184), finding its usefulness limited for want of funds, and the sufferings of lepers unlimited, endowed it with considerable wealth. He gave to it for ever five marks of silver yearly—the tenth of a certain toll—and the profits arising for ever from the sale of the bark of his wood at Chudleigh. His example stimulated the Chapter of St. Peter's, in the same city, to grant a weekly supply of bread for ever. The good Bishop Bartholomew wearied the Pope to give a charter to the hospital, making the endowment an everlasting benefaction, as he viewed the curse of leprosy to be as widespread as humanity, and as lasting as the race of man. But he died before his wishes were gratified. However, Pope Celestine III. granted or confirmed a charter in the year 1192, and the charity exists to this day.

Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, held a synod at Westminster, in the year 1200, to carry out the decree of the Council of Lateran (1172) to build a number of churches solely for leprous people, for they had long been expelled from all parish churches. They were to have priests, officers, and graveyards exclusively for themselves. They were released at the same time from all claims for tithes for their land or cattle. So careful and determined were our ancestors to remove from sight and smell every leper, that a law was early in existence to enforce their removal out of towns and villages “to a solitary place.” The writ is in our ancient law-books, entitled *De Leprose Amorendo*, and it is fully stated by Judge Fitz-Herbert in his *Natura Breuum*. King Edward III. finding that, in spite of the old law, leprous persons were concealed in houses inhabited by other persons, gave commandment to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs to make proclamation in every ward of the city and its suburbs, “that all *leprous* persons inhabiting there should avoid within fifteen days next,” etc., etc.

At the city of Bath, a bath, with physicians and attendants, was provided and endowed—exclusively for lepers—and the endowments are still paid. That the bath was occasionally efficacious, in connection with improved diet, we have sure evidence; for one leper in late days had fixed to the bath a mural tablet to say that “William Berry, of Garthorpe, near Melton Mowbray, in the county of Leicester, was cured of a dry leprosy by the help of God and the bath, 1737.”—*Gibson Ward*.

880.—PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN ONE BED.—*Luke xi. 7.*

Though the expression used in this verse need not be pressed to mean that all the family were together in one bed, it is interesting to note that this is a very usual custom in the East. Parents sleep in the same chamber with their children, unless they can afford to keep servants, to whose charge they may be entrusted. A mother has been known to sleep in the same bed with her five children ; this bed being spread upon a permanent platform, built of wood, at one corner of the room, with a low railing around it.

See also Series I. *Biblical Things*, paragraph No. 314.

881.—HERB FOODS USED BY BEDOUINS.—*Gen. i. 29, 30.*

“The day passes on. About noon our host, naturally enough, supposes us hungry, and accordingly a new dish is brought in ; it looks much like a bowl full of coarse red paste, or bran mixed with ochre. This is Samh, a main article of subsistence to the Bedouins of Northern Arabia. Throughout this part of the desert grows a small herbaceous and tufted plant, with juicy stalks, and a little ovate yellow-tinted leaf ; the flowers are of a brighter yellow, with many stamens and pistils. When the blossoms fall off there remains in place of each a four-leaved capsule, about the size of an ordinary pea ; and this, when ripe, opens to show a mass of minute reddish seeds, resembling grit in feel and appearance, but farinaceous in substance. The ripening season is in July, when old and young, men and women, all are out to collect the unsown and untoiled-for harvest. The capsules are gathered, the seed separated from them, and kept like a stock of flour for the ensuing year. These seeds, when wanted for use, are coarsely ground in a hand-mill, then mixed with water and boiled into the substance which we now had before us. Its taste and quality were pretty well hit off by Salem, who described it ‘not so good as wheat and rather better than barley-meal.’ Much did we admire the care of Providence in thus preparing a subsistence for these nomades, who might else be often exposed to all the horrors of absolute famine. Too lazy by far to till the earth, even where a sufficient abundance of subterraneous water renders it susceptible of cultivation, they would, but for this plant, have been reduced to live on the milk and flesh of their camels—an insufficient resource if no other were at hand. But the Samh, growing up everywhere without labour, and productive without culture, supplies the deficiency,

and forms their staple article of food, their very staff of life ; and although it may not prove entirely satisfactory or over-palatable to those accustomed to better fare, it suffices for men who have seldom or never tasted anything better or more nutritious. Another gift of nature is the Mesa'a, a fruit well known to Bedouins, though neglected by all else. Its shrub attains two or three feet in height, woody and tangled, with small and pointed leaves of a lively green, and a little red star-like flower. This in June gives place to a berry, much resembling in size, colour, and taste our own red currant, though inferior to it in flavour, while its sweetness predominates too much over its acidity. The Bedouins collect and greedily devour it, or, boiling it down with a little water, procure a sort of molasses, much esteemed by them, but by them alone. This, with the Samh just mentioned, camel's milk, and an occasional repast of butcher's meat, though that is a rare luxury, forms all their list of eatables."—*Palgrave.*

882.—AN ARAB PRINCESS.—*Gen. xii. 11.*

The following description of Amsha, daughter of Hassan, Shéikh of the Tai Arabs, and wife of Sofuk, chief of the Shammar, is given by Layard :—

" From her rank and beauty she had earned the title of 'Queen of the Desert.' Her form, traceable through the thin shirt which she wore, like other Arab women, was well-proportioned and graceful. She was tall in stature and fair in complexion. Her features were regular and her eyes dark and brilliant. She had undoubtedly claims to more than ordinary beauty ; to the Arabs she was perfection, for all the resources of their art had been exhausted to complete what nature had begun. Her lips were dyed deep blue, her eyebrows were continued in indigo until they united over the nose, her cheeks and forehead were spotted with beauty-marks, her eyelashes darkened by kohl ; and on her legs and bosom could be seen the tattooed ends of flowers and fanciful ornaments, which were carried in festoons and network over her whole body. Hanging from each ear, and reaching to her waist, was an enormous earring of gold, terminating in a tablet of the same material, carved and ornamented with four turquoises. Her nose was also adorned with a prodigious gold ring, set with jewels, of such ample dimensions that it covered the mouth, and was to be removed when the lady ate. Ponderous rows of strung beads, Assyrian cylinders, fragments of coral, agates, and parti-coloured stones hung from her neck ; loose silver

rings encircled her wrists and ankles, making a loud jingling as she walked. Over her blue shirt was thrown, when she issued from her tent, a coarse striped cloak, and a common black handkerchief was tied round her head."

883.—“GO WITH HIM TWAIN.”—*Matt.* v. 41.

We can all of us easily understand the other part of this command ; and when struck on one cheek, we should in humility offer the other ; because, unfortunately, we know what striking is. But many must have wondered what can have given rise to the command of going a second mile with the violent man who has already compelled you to go one mile. Nobody now, in this country, is ever injured by such treatment. But we learn from coins and inscriptions that the couriers in the service of the Roman Government had the privilege of travelling through the provinces free of expense, and of calling on the villagers to forward their carriages and baggage to the next town. Under a despotic government this became a cruel grievance. Every Roman of high rank claimed the same privilege ; the horses were unyoked from the plough to be harnessed to the rich man’s carriage. It was the most galling injustice which the provinces suffered. We have an inscription on the frontier-town of Egypt and Nubia, mentioning its petition for a redress of this grievance ; and a coin of Nerva’s reign records its abolition in Italy. Our Lord could give no stronger exhortation to patient humility than by advising his Syrian hearers, instead of resenting the demand for one stage’s “vehiculation,” to go willingly a second time.

884.—“SALUTE NO MAN BY THE WAY.”—*Luke* x. 4.

The reason for this injunction lies in the serious delays which the very formal salutations of the East involved. The following description of the salutations necessary on receiving a visitor gives a very clear and full impression of the formality of Eastern life. It is taken from the valuable works of Van Lennep.

“In performing the duties of hospitality to a traveller or visitor, be he a stranger or a friend, the host receives him in his best room, or in his *livan*, if the weather be mild. The reception-room becomes his apartment for the time being. Here his friends call upon him, and here he transacts his business ; here, also, he takes his meals, his host himself waiting upon him, if he desires to show him special respect ; and here he sleeps at night upon bedding kept for the purpose in a

closet of the same room. Before his arrival a messenger announces his approach to the master of the house, who hastens to his gate, holds the bridle and stirrup, and helps him dismount. If they are old friends, or of rank nearly equal, they embrace, each placing his right hand upon the other's left shoulder, and kissing him on the right cheek, then putting the left hand on the other's right shoulder and kissing him on the left cheek. It was thus that treacherous Joab embraced Amasa, and instead of placing his right hand upon his shoulder, seized him by the beard, and stabbed him 'with the sword in his left' 'in the fifth rib' (2 Sam. xx. 9, 10). And thus did Judas Iscariot kiss our Lord."

"The *salaam* is now exchanged, 'Peace be unto thee;' answer, 'And unto thee be peace.' But if the visitor be of a higher rank than his host the latter kisses him not, but 'bows down to the earth' when he salutes him, touching the ground with his hand, which he then brings to his lips and his head (Gen. xviii. 2). This mode of salutation existed both in Persia and Egypt, being pictured upon the monuments. The host now leads the way into the house, places his friend in the seat of honour, the chief corner of the divan; then takes a seat by his side, if on a footing of equality, or kisses his hand, the hem of his garment, or even his feet, according to his rank, and, retiring a few steps, crosses his hands upon his girdle—the habitual posture of the servant—thus signifying that he is waiting for orders. The guest, on the other hand, seeks not to be outdone in politeness; he accepts the honours due to his position, but endeavours to make his host feel at ease by insisting upon his sitting down: 'No, not on the floor, I beg you, nor there on the farthest corner of the divan, but here by my side.' Then follow salutations, always begun by the man of higher rank, with inquiries concerning health, and a host of empty phrases which display the good breeding of the parties. The Persians excel all other Orientals in the use of these phrases and forms of etiquette, which they carry to a pitch often ridiculed by their neighbours. It is curious to find, Herodotus states, that the Persians in his day 'paid so great attention to forms of address that one could thereby at once ascertain the rank of a stranger; when of equal rank, instead of speaking, they kiss each other on the lips; when one is a little inferior to the other, the kiss is given on the cheek; and when the difference of rank is great, the inferior prostrates himself upon the ground.'

The elaborate and hindering salutations customary on casual

meetings of friends at the road-side have been otherwise illustrated. Such salutations are particularly formal and tedious among the Druses and other non-Christian sects of the present time. Dr. Bonar gives the following strikingly illustrative incident :—

As we were turning in by a narrow, dark, arched lane at Cairo, my donkey-man sprung aside with a loud shout of delight and left me. Of course I halted, not knowing my way. Some donkeys were coming on in front, and my driver had seen in the foremost of the riders a brother of a friend who was returning from a journey. My donkey-man was on foot, but this mattered not. In a moment he leaped up and seized his friend round the neck, hugging him most strenuously, and kissing him first on one side of the face and then on the other. This mutual operation being over they inquired after each other's health, and then went on their way.

885.—EFFECT OF PERSECUTION ON DAVID'S CHARACTER. *Psalm xviii. Title.*

All the indications show that David was exceedingly sensitive to his surroundings and associations. He was therefore graciously trained by God for his future life-work by a very varied and chequered career. “The period (of the persecution under Saul) left traces on David's character never afterwards effaced. Hence sprang that ready sagacity, natural to one who had so long moved with his life in his hand. At the very beginning of this period of his career, it is said of him that ‘he behaved himself wisely,’ evidently with the impression that it was a wisdom called forth by his difficult position—that peculiar Jewish caution, like the instinct of a hunted animal, so strongly developed in the persecuted Israelites of the middle ages. We cannot fix with certainty the dates of the Psalms of this epoch of his life. But, in some at least, we can trace even the outward circumstances with which he was surrounded. In them we see David's flight ‘as a bird to the mountains’—like the partridges that haunt the wild hills of Southern Judah. As he catches the glimpses of Saul's archers and spearmen from behind the rocks, he sees them ‘bending their bows, making ready their arrows upon the string;’ he sees the approach of those who hold no converse except through those armed, bristling bands, whose very ‘teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.’

“The savage scenery suggests the overthrow of his enemies. ‘They shall be a portion for the ravening jackals.’ They shall

'be overtaken by fire and brimstone, storm and tempest,' such as laid waste the cities of old, in the deep chasms above which he was wandering. His mind teems with the recollections of the 'rocks and fastnesses,' the 'caves and leafy coverts' amongst which he takes refuge, the 'precipices' down which he 'slips,' the steps cut in the cliffs for him to tread in, the activity as of a 'wild goat' with which he bounds from crag to crag to escape his enemies.

"But yet more in these Psalms we observe the growth of his dependence on God, nurtured by his hairbreadth escapes. 'As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of adversity,' was the usual form of his oath or asseveration in later times. The wild, waterless hills through which he passes give a new turn to his longing after the fountain of Divine consolations. 'O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee. My soul thirsteth for Thee in a barren and dry land where no water is.' The hiding-places in which the rock arches over his head are to him the very shadow of the Almighty wings."—*Stanley*.

886.—KISSING THE FEET.—*Luke* vii. 45.

Roberts writes:—See that poor woman whose husband has committed some crime, for which he is to be taken to the magistrates. She rushes to the injured individual, she casts herself down, and begins to kiss his feet; she touches them with her nose, her eyes, her ears, and forehead; her long hair is dishevelled, and she beseeches the *feet* of the offended man to forgive her husband. "Ah, my lord, the gods will then forgive you. My husband will in future be your slave, my children will love you, the people will praise you; forgive, forgive, my lord!" . . . When a great priest is going on a pilgrimage to a distant country, or when he has returned, or when he is about to die, then either a man or a woman can perform the following ceremony:—The individual who makes the offering, on coming near the holy man, prostrates himself at his feet; he then washes them with scented or holy water, strews flowers over them, and kisses them.

887.—THE ORIGIN OF THE ALTAR.—*Gen.* viii. 20.

It is evident that the altar is directly connected with sacrifice by fire. It was at first the *hearth* on which the fire was laid. This would be raised upon stones a little above the ground, for the sake of draught, and we can easily trace the

process by which it was developed into the shapely altar suited for the more elaborate ceremonial.

"The altar became the centre of all Divine worship, and the sacred spot where earth and heaven have their meeting-place, where religion seeks to impart her whole strength to man, to reveal to him what is most full of mystery, and to exhaust before him what is most inexhaustible. All religion is a reciprocal relation between God and man; all real religion is an intercourse between them." The permanent altar is the declaration that man means to have that relation fixed and continuous. The altar, as the hearth of the fire which mounts up to heaven, represents the perpetual realisation of this intercourse between heaven and earth.

888.—DENS OF LIONS.—*Dan.* vi. 16.

Kitto gives the following proofs that this mode of dealing with criminals was in use in ancient Babylon :—

This is a new kind of punishment, not previously mentioned in Scripture ; and that it first occurs here at Babylon is a remarkable fact, showing the accuracy of the sacred writers in their references to the manners and usages of different nations. We are not aware that any ancient writer mentions that the inhabitants of Babylon were in the habit of throwing offenders to be devoured by lions kept in dens for the purpose. But we have the still more conclusive evidence of monuments brought to light by modern travellers, on the sites not only of Babylon, but of Susa also, representing lions destroying and preying upon human beings. One was found at Babylon, near the great mass of ruin which is supposed to mark the site of the grand western palace. It represents a lion standing over the body of a prostrate man, extended on a pedestal which measures nine feet in length by three in breadth. The whole is from a block of stone of the ingredient and texture of granite, the scale colossal, and the sculpture in a very barbarous style. The head has been lately knocked off; but when Mr. Rich saw it the statue was in a perfect state, and he remarks that "the mouth had a circular aperture into which a man might introduce his fist." Another very curious representation is from an engraved gem, dug from the ruins of Babylon by Captain Mignan. It exhibits a man standing upon two sphinxes engaged with two fierce animals, possibly intended for lions. If it be not an astronomical representation, it might seem very probably an exhibition, partly symbolical, of some such event as the present. The "Fellow of several learned Societies," in

adverting to this, directs attention to the great similarity which he finds between the features and dress of the man, and those of the captive Jews in Egypt, in that representation which we have copied, from the sources to which he refers, under 2 Chron. xxxv. On comparing them, considerable resemblance may certainly be found about the head and its attire. A third subject is from a block of white marble found near the tomb of Daniel at Susa, and thus described by Sir R. K. Porter in his *Travels* (vol. ii. 416). "It does not exceed ten inches in width and depth, measures twenty in length, and is hollow within, as if to receive some deposit. Three of its sides are cut in bas relief—two of them with similar representations of a man apparently naked, except a sash round his waist and a sort of cap on his head. His hands are bound behind him. The corner of the stone forms the neck of the figure, so that its head forms one of its ends. Two lions in sitting postures appear on either side at the top, each having a paw on the head of the man." These are certainly satisfactory illustrations of the custom in question, as existing at Babylon and Susa, and others might be adduced from Babylonian coins.

889.—THE GEOLOGY OF THE CREATION.—*Gen. i. 20—25.*

Dr. Harold Browne thinks that "in the present condition of geological science, and with the great obscurity of the record of creation in Gen. i., it may be wise not to attempt an accurate comparison of the one with the other. Some few points, however, seem clearly to come out. In Genesis, first of all, creation is spoken of as 'in the beginning,' a period of indefinite, possibly of most remote distance in the past; secondly, the progress of the preparation of the earth's surface is described as gradually advancing from the rocks to the vegetable world, and the less perfectly organised animal creation, then gradually mounting up through birds and mammals, till it culminates in man. This is the course of creation as popularly described in Genesis, and the rocks give their testimony, at least in general, to the same order and progress. The chief difference, if any, of the two witnesses would seem to be, that the Rocks speak of (1) marine plants, (2) marine animals, (3) land plants, (4) land animals in their successive developments; whereas Moses speaks of (1) plants, (2) marine animals, (3) land animals; a difference not amounting to divergence. As physiology must have been nearly, and geology wholly unknown to the Semitic nations of antiquity, such a general correspondence of sacred history with modern science is surely more striking

and important than any apparent difference in details. Efforts have been made to compare the Indian cosmogony with the Biblical, which utterly fail. The cosmogony of the Hindoos is thoroughly adapted to their Pantheistic theology ; the Hebrew corresponding with the pure personal Monotheism of the Old Testament. The only important resemblance of any ancient cosmogony with the Scriptural account is to be found in the Persian or Zoroastrian."

It is well to remember that a miraculous revelation of scientific truths was never designed by God for man. The account of creation is given in popular language ; not anticipatory of modern science, but not inconsistent with it.

890.—SMOOTH STONES OF THE STREAM.—*Isaiah lvii. 6.*

"I have several 'smooth stones of the stream' from the New Hebrides, which were used as idols, and have heard of precisely similar stones being used in other parts of the Pacific. But what do they do with the *stones*? Very much like what the Earl of Roden says the people of Inniskea, off the coast of Mayo, do, or did, with their sacred stone. 'A stone, carefully wrapped up in flannel, is brought out at certain periods to be adored ; and, when a storm arises, this god is supplicated to send a wreck on their coast.' Some of the Polynesian stone gods were supposed to cause pigs to multiply ; others were prayed to for the removal of storms ; and others were supposed to act as rain-makers and rain-stoppers. There was one of these rain-controlling stones in a district in Samoa. When there was too much rain, those who kept the stone put it to the fire to dry, and cause the rain to stop. If there was great drought, they took the stone to the water and dipped it, thinking that, by wetting the stone, rain would be the consequence."—*Turner.*

891.—MODE OF KEEPING THE FEAST OF PURIM. *Esther iv. 16.*

There is reason to fear that the way in which this feast was usually celebrated was quite unworthy of the events celebrated, and of the general spirit of the Jewish festivals. In remembrance of Esther's fast, recorded in the above passage, the festival commenced with a fast, held on the thirteenth day of the month, but, as soon as this was over, all restraints upon disorder and impropriety seem to have been broken through. Feasting and excessive drinking marked the time ; and at last the feast degenerated into a kind of saturnalia. No specially

holy injunctions guarded this particular feast, and it became rather a national holiday than a reserved and sanctified *holy-day*.

892.—MOSES MIGHTY IN DEEDS.—*Acts vii. 22.*

Josephus tells a curious story, which may perhaps be accepted as an illustration of Stephen's words. He says that the king of Ethiopia (the country we now call Abyssinia) invaded the dominions of Pharaoh with a great army, and so alarmed the Egyptians that, to save themselves, they begged Moses to become their leader. He consented, and marched against the Ethiopians at the head of a large force. In this march he proved his wisdom in a very remarkable way. One road to the place where the king of Ethiopia was encamped was by the river Nile, but this was a long way round. Another route, very much shorter, led through a desert so infested by serpents and other venomous reptiles, that it was thought impossible for the Egyptians to take it. Moses, however, determined upon this path, and, to destroy the reptiles, took with him large numbers of ibises, birds that abound in Egypt, and destroy the snakes and reptiles so busily, that the people think them sent by God Himself to keep the country clear of these noxious creatures, and in old times would put any person to death who killed one, even by accident. These birds the army of Moses carried in large crates, or cages, as far as the desert, when they were let fly, and soon cleared the way for the troops to advance in safety. Thus the Egyptians were enabled to come up with the Ethiopians long before they were expected, and to conquer them easily. The story adds that Moses, with his soldiers, pursued them as far as Saba, a royal city of Ethiopia; that here he married the daughter of the king, and returned in peace and triumph to Egypt.

893.—THE SEDITION OF THEUDAS.—*Acts v. 36.*

It is difficult to decide exactly what event Gamaliel refers to. The name Theudas, or Thaddeus, is so common that a man with this name may well have been prominent in more than one of the many insurrections against the hated Roman power. Josephus tells of one Theudas, in the time of the procuratorship of Fadus, who prevailed upon a great multitude to take their wealth and follow him to the river Jordan, which he proposed to divide in a miraculous manner. But this event took place after the death of King Herod-Agrippa, so it could not have been referred to by Gamaliel.

Kitto, with other Biblical writers, finds indications of a sedition which meets the case, though the name of Theudas cannot be found in connection with it.

“When Archelaus was at Rome, soliciting from the Emperor Augustus the confirmation of his father’s will, almost the whole of Palestine was in commotion. In Idumæa, 2,000 soldiers, who had been dismissed by Herod, in conjunction with several others, took the field against Achiab, a relation of Herod, and compelled him, with his soldiers, to retire to the mountains. In Galilee, Judas, the son of Hezekiah, the leader of a band of robbers that had been suppressed by Herod, made himself master of Sepphoris, armed his numerous followers from the arsenal of that city, pillaged the country, and spread devastation and terror on every side. In Perea, Simon, one of Herod’s slaves, assumed the diadem, collected a band of desperate men, robbed the inhabitants, and, among other acts of violence, burnt the royal castle at Jericho. Another mob fell upon Amathus on the Jordan, and burnt the royal castle. A shepherd, named *Athronges*, also assumed the regal title, collected a large body of followers, and, with his four brothers, all men of gigantic stature, laid waste the country, plundered and slew the inhabitants, and sometimes repulsed the Romans themselves. In short, the whole country was full of bands of robbers, each having a king or chief at its head. It is therefore highly probable that the Theudas of Gamaliel arose at this time.”

894.—DOORKEEPERS.—*Psalm lxxxiv. 10.*

The word translated *doorkeeper*, may also mean *sit at the threshold*; and a missionary tells us that in India the office of doorkeeper is truly respectable and confidential.

Doorkeepers of temples are men of the greatest dignity and power; whereas the psalmist was thinking of the lowliest and most humble situation. “I would rather choose to sit at the threshold.” This is the situation of the devotee and the beggar. “Excuse me, sir, I pray you, I had better lie at the threshold than do that,” is a frequent mode of expression amongst Orientals. The psalmist prefers the situation and attitude of a beggar, at the threshold of the house of the Lord, to the most splendid dwellings of the wicked.

895.—MEMPHIS A BURYING PLACE.—*Hosea ix. 6.*

This city, now called Mitrahenny, was once an extensive city on the west bank of the Nile, and was the capital of Middle

Egypt. It is curious that it should be spoken of by Hosea as a burying-place ; but travellers tell us that throughout the whole district, monuments and ruins of a great city have been, and still are being, constantly found buried in the sand ; whilst the rear forms one unbroken cemetery, pyramids, tombs, and mummy pits ; so that this vast receptacle for the dead separated the desert from the great city and the cultivated lands. The prophet intimates the distress of the Ephraimites who returned to Egypt when they found that they must be buried among cats, and birds, and bulls, and their idolatrous worshippers.

896.—OX-GOADS.—*Judges* iii. 31.

It is well known that, in the East, cattle are driven with a pointed stick, or goad, but it is not realised that this may become a really formidable weapon. The following observations by an Eastern traveller will serve to impress this fact. The country people were now everywhere at plough in the fields in order to sow cotton. It was observable that in ploughing they used goads of an extraordinary size ; upon measuring several I found them about eight feet long, and at the bigger end six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade, or paddle of iron strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working. May we not from hence conjecture that it was with such a goad as one of these that Shamgar made that prodigious slaughter related of him ? I am confident that whoever should see one of these instruments would judge it to be a weapon not less fit, perhaps fitter, than a sword for such an execution. Goads of this sort I saw always used hereabouts, and also in Syria ; and the reason is because the same single person both drives the oxen and also holds and manages the plough, which makes it necessary to use such a goad as is above described, to avoid the encumbrance of two instruments.

At Tyre they were ploughing the ground for corn. Oxen were yoked in pairs for this purpose, and the plough was small and simple of construction ; so that it appeared necessary for two to follow each other in the same furrow, as they invariably did. The husbandman holding the plough with one hand, by a handle like that of a walking crutch, bore in the other a goad of seven or eight feet in length, armed with a sharp point of iron at one end, and at the other with a plate of the same metal, shaped like a calking chisel. One attendant only was necessary for each plough, as he who guided it

with one hand spurred the oxen with the point of the goad, and cleared the earth from the ploughshare by its spaded heel with the other.

897.—THOU SOWEST NOT THAT BODY THAT SHALL BE.
1 Cor. xv. 37.

Some light may be thrown on ancient philosophical notions respecting the relations of the soul and the body by recent studies in the Egyptian theologies. A French professor, M. Maspero, gives some very curious information. According to Egyptian metaphysics, the man consisted of a body, a soul, a spirit (or intelligence), and a *double*. This double was a coloured and incorporeal copy of the bodily form. Of the child there existed a child-double; of the woman, a woman-double; of the man, a man-double. Its name was *Khow*, or *Ka*. These four essential parts of the human being—*i.e.*, the body, the soul, the intelligence, and the *double*—were capable of different degrees of immortality, and might co-exist as one harmonious whole, or dwell separately in wholly different spheres. The soul and intelligence, for instance, might together fulfil a distinct supernatural destiny, and emigrate to the world beyond the grave, while the body and the double yet lingered out their appointed time on earth.

M. Maspero says that the whole tomb is frequently styled the “House of the Double.” In some of the tombs remaining intact at the present day, there is found a long and narrow passage, constructed in the thickness of the masonry, entirely walled up, and communicating with the votive chapel above the sepulchral-vault by only a small square window some five feet above the pavement. In this passage are found portrait-statues of the deceased, generally of life-size and coloured, and often in large numbers. M. Maspero thus explains their being stored and multiplied: “The body, which in life had served to sustain the double, being necessarily disfigured by the process of embalmment, no longer faithfully represents the form and features of the dead. It is also liable to injury or destruction. It may be burned, dismembered, dispersed; and once it is destroyed, what is to become of the double. It must fall back upon the statues, which are of durable material, and may be turned out in any number. One poor body gives the double but a single chance for existence; whereas twenty statues represent twenty such chances. Hence the astonishing number of statues found in the tombs of the wealthy; the piety of relatives having by this multiplication of images

sought to assure the immortality of the double. Twenty duplicate statues were discovered by M. Mariette in the celebrated tomb of Ti at Sakkarah. Eight statues of King Shafra were found in the so-called Temple of the Sphinx ; these, however, were not in the "passage," as this had previously been rifled, but in a broken pile at the bottom of a well at the east end of the building."

898.—CORN RAISED FROM WEEDS.—*Psalm lxv. 9.*

In a former paragraph it was stated that corn is only known as a cultivated plant (series first, sec. 380). The only fact which seems to oppose that conclusion is narrated by Dr. Hogg. It is said that a M. Esprit Fabre, of Agde, in the South of France, made some experiments with a weedy plant, that is now found plentifully in Italy and Sicily, about which there had existed for ages a tradition that it was the parent of all wheat. He observed that this weed always showed a tendency to assume a higher form, but there it ended : it did not go beyond this first stage of improvement, till M. Fabre, having selected some of the finest seeds, sowed them, and of the finest seeds of this sowing he selected others, and also sowed them : this he continued to do for twelve years ; and each year he found in the produce a closer resemblance to wheat. At the twelfth year he found that the annually selected seeds of this common weed became true wheat, such as we know it.

So important a fact needs much further confirmation and experiment before it can be fully accepted. It is, however, full of interest as an experiment.

899.—EASTERN BETROTHAL.—*Hosea ii. 19, 20.*

This is a much more formal matter than it is with us. In the East young people of the different sexes are not allowed to have free companionships. Mohammed forbade the men seeing the face of any woman except such as they could not marry ; that is, their mothers or sisters. In Egypt now, if a man wishes a wife, he is not allowed to visit the harems of his friends to select one, but he must employ a woman, who is known as a *Khatbeh*, to find one for him. It is the business of these *Khatbehs* to make wedding matches, and for their work they are duly paid. On finding such a girl as the man may desire, she praises her up to the man as exceedingly beautiful and suitable for him ; and the father of the girl is then waited upon to ascertain the amount of dowry that he will require,

for all wives must be paid for as they were in patriarchal days. Jacob, having no money or property, agreed to serve Laban seven years for his wife. The price now asked varies from five shillings to three hundred pounds ; but such a sum as this latter indicates wealthy society. At the time of betrothal, two-thirds of the dowry must be paid to the father, in the presence of witnesses, even if the girl be but five or six years old, and the man must wait for years before he can be married to her. The man is not allowed to see the face of his betrothed one until the morning of the marriage, the veil being worn during the very restricted intercourse permitted to betrothed parties. So binding is the betrothal engagement that any improprieties committed by the girl are visited with the severities due to unfaithfulness after marriage. In due time after the betrothal the man comes and demands his betrothed, and a day is fixed for the consummation of the marriage.

900.—THE POWER OF THE SCORPION.—*Rev.* ix. 3.

A writer in the *Entomologist* gives the following observation on the habits of the scorpion :—“A friend having brought me a scorpion from France, I have much pleasure in recording the manner of his feeding. His diet has been confined to juvenile cockroaches ; he has been kept in a bottle very loosely corked, and provided with a wet rag on which to repose at leisure, or disport himself, as he might prefer. When a cockroach was dropped in he became excited, but was far too dignified to pursue, whatever might be the state of his appetite. No sooner, however, did the cockroach venture within reach of the scorpion than he seized it with both his claws, and lifting the captive high in air, seemed totally to disregard its violent struggles for liberty. Slowly and judiciously he curved his jointed tail over the back, and then, with the finger-like sting at the extremity, inflicted the death-wound between two of the segments. Death followed almost immediately, but the scorpion appeared only to suck the blood of his victim.”

901.—THE ORIGINALITY OF CHRIST'S MORAL TEACHINGS.
Matt. v., vi., vii.

M. Lecky says, in his great work on *Rationalism in Europe* :—“Nothing too, can, as I conceive, be more erroneous or superficial than the reasoning of those who maintain that the moral element in Christianity has in it nothing distinctive or peculiar. The method of this school, of which Bolingbroke may be regarded as the type, is to collect from the writings of different

heathen writers certain isolated passages embodying precepts that were inculcated by Christianity ; and when the collection had become very large the task was supposed to be accomplished. But the true originality of a system of moral teaching depends not so much on the elements of which it is composed, as upon the manner in which they are fused into a symmetrical whole, upon the proportionate value that is attached to different qualities; or, to state the same thing by a single word, upon the type of character that is formed. Now it is quite certain that the Christian type differs, not only in degree, but *in kind*, from the pagan one."

The philosophical schools of Greece, and the sects of Judaism, differ from Christ's conception of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the moral fitness for entering it, both in range and compass, in spirit and in aim, not merely in their modes of organisation. All merely human schemes of moral association and co-operation vitally differ from that founded by the Head and Lord of the Christian community. In these days the differences need to be set forth with a growing distinctness.

902.—BETTER THAN TEN SONS.—*1 Sam. i. 8.*

From the expression used by Elkanah it might readily be assumed that Peninnah was the mother of ten sons. It is, however, more probable that the number is used indefinitely, to express the thought that the share she had in his affection—the assurance of his unalterable regard—ought to be as much a source of comfort to her as the possession of *many* children. There is a fact which throws some light upon Elkanah's use of the number *ten*. Among the Arabians a woman who had given birth to ten sons was deemed entitled to distinguished honours. In the Bedouin romance of *Antar* we read : "Now it was a custom among the Arabs, that when a woman brought forth ten male children, she should be Moonejeba, that is, ennobled, and for her name to be published among the Arabs, and they used to say that such an one is ennobled."

903.—SAILORS' PRAYERS.—*Jonah i. 5.*

Writing from personal observation of Hindoo manners, Roberts says : "Never was the conduct of a heathen crew during a storm more naturally and graphically described than it is in this passage. No sooner does danger appear, than one begins to beat his head, and cry aloud, 'Siva, Siva !' another beats his breast, and piteously shrieks forth, 'Vishnoo !' and a third strikes his thigh, and shouts out with all his might,

‘Varuna !’ Thus do they cry to their gods, instead of doing their duty. More than once have I been in these circumstances, and never can I forget the horror and helplessness of the poor idolaters.”

904.—EASTERN WEANING-TIME.—*1 Sam.* i. 22, 23.

If Samuel was to be left permanently at the Tabernacle, it is certain that he must have been more than an infant of three years when Hannah took him with her. Weaning takes place much later in the East than with us. The Mohammedan law prohibits a woman from weaning her child before the expiration of two years from the period of its birth, unless with the consent of her husband. The Jewish commentators generally take the period, in this instance, to have been two years ; and we know that the time was sometimes extended to three years or more. Still a child of even three years old would need constant motherly care and could be of no use, only a trouble and anxiety, if left in the charge of the aged priest. A suggestion has been made by one Comestor, an old writer (A.D. 1473), which may deserve careful consideration. He says that there was a *threefold* weaning of children in old times : the first from the mother’s milk when they were three years old, the second from their tender age and the care of a nurse when they were seven years of age, and the third from childish ways when they reached the age of twelve. We can imagine Samuel would be of some service in waiting on Eli at the age of seven, but twelve is the yet more likely age. No indication of his age is given in the Scripture narrative.

905.—THE CHINESE UNICORN.—*Psalm xcii.* 10.

The traveller, M. Huc, says that this animal, which has so long been regarded as a fabulous creature, really exists in Thibet. It is represented in the sculptures and paintings of the Buddhic temples. Even in China you often see it in landscapes that ornament the inns of the northern provinces. M. Huc had at one time a small Mongol treatise on natural history for the use of children, in which a unicorn formed one of the pictorial illustrations. He was not, however, fortunate enough to see one during his travels. Mr. Hodgson, an English resident in Nepaul, has succeeded in getting possession of one, the skin and horn of which were sent to Calcutta. It is a species of antelope, reddish in colour, with white belly. Its distinctive features are, first, a black horn, long and

pointed, with three slight curvatures, and circular annulations towards the base ; these annulations are more prominent in front than behind ; there are two tufts of hair which project from the exterior of each nostril, and much hair also down round the nose and mouth, which gives the animal's head a heavy appearance.

The Mongol History gives a curious tradition relative to a fact which took place in 1224, when Tchinggis Khan was preparing to attack Hindostan. "This conqueror having subdued Thibet set out to penetrate into Ened Kek (India). As he was ascending Mount Djadanaring, he perceived a wild beast approaching him, one of the species called *serou*, which has but one horn on the top of the head. This beast knelt thrice before the monarch, as if to show him respect. Every one being astonished at this event, the monarch exclaimed : 'The Empire of Hindostan is, they say, the birthplace of the majestic Buddhas and Buddhistavas, and also of the powerful Bogdas, or princes of antiquity. What then can be the meaning of this dumb animal saluting me like a human being ?' Having thus spoken he returned to his country."

Our readers will not understand that we identify this creature with the unicorn of Scripture.

906.—THREE CLASSES OF CHALDÆAN MAGI. *Dan. ii. 2; v. 11.*

The great Chaldaean magical books were composed in three distinct parts, and from the relics which remain the general contents of each part can be estimated. The title of one of them was *The Wicked Spirits*, and it was filled exclusively with formulæ of conjurations and imprecations which were designed to repulse demons and other wicked spirits, to avert their fatal action, and to shelter the invoker from their attacks. The second book probably consisted of a collection of incantations to which was attributed the power of curing various maladies. Lastly, the third book contained hymns to certain gods. A supernatural and mysterious power was attributed to the chanting of these hymns, which are, however, of a very different character from the regular liturgical prayers of the official religion, a few of which have been preserved to us. It is curious to notice that the three parts composing thus the great work on magic (of which Sir Henry Rawlinson has found the remains), correspond exactly to the three classes of Chaldaean doctors which Daniel enumerates, together with the astrologers and divines (*Kasdim* and *Gazrim*) ; that is, the

Khartummim, or conjurers, the *Chakamim*, or physicians, and the *Asaphim*, or theosophists.

907.—MOHAMMEDAN DIVORCE LAWS.—*Isaiah l. 1.*

Mr. J. W. Redhouse gives the following interesting account of the working of the divorce laws in the religious system of Islam. Comparisons may be made between these rules and those of Mosaism and Christianity.

The marriage and divorce laws of Islam are both, in several respects, juster to women than the laws of Europe, than the laws even of England. Polygamy is doubtless an injustice to the first wife, generally taken in youth. The second wife, if adult, or her guardian for her, enters it voluntarily. All co-wives have equal legal rights of society and maintenance. Their property remains absolutely their own during marriage, neither their husband nor their children having the smallest claim on it, save as paupers, should this sad case arise. The dower is paid by the husband to the wife, part at the marriage and part on dissolution of marriage by death or repudiation. It never goes to her relations, but to herself alone, and then becomes her absolute property, as do all presents made to her by him, or by relations or friends. He must maintain her according to the more exalted of his or her social ranks, or according to their circumstances. He can repudiate her at his mere will whenever he pleases, but must pay her the deferred dower, and maintain her in his or her house for a definite period, varying according to well-understood laws. If both are willing to separate, she generally foregoes her deferred dower, and sometimes pays him a sum of money to boot. They are then both equally free to re-marry. Definite laws regulate the custody and maintenance of the children.

908.—THE EARLY DEW.—*Hosea vi. 4.*

We can form very little conception of the intensity of Eastern dews. A traveller tells of one occasion when, in the desert, the tent was as wet as if it had been soaked in water, and the bedding was not much better; in the morning their starting was delayed; but even at eight o'clock, the dews were so heavy that he was glad to wear macintosh coat and overalls: and yet when the sun broke out, the dew was at once dispersed like smoke. "We often, indeed, have heavy dews, and we frequently see them totally dispersed, but their dispersion is gradual; whereas, in the desert, the sun no sooner shows his face than the dews disappear, drawn up like smoke." The

prophet Hosea makes a very beautiful and suggestive use of this fact.

909.—NEW TESTAMENT SLAVES.—*Romans i. 1.*

The word translated “servants” is one that properly describes the Roman “slave.” Some account of the social condition of slaves under the Roman empire will, therefore, be helpful to the Bible student:—

“Men became slaves among the Romans by being taken in war, by sale, by way of punishment, or by being born in a state of servitude. Those enemies who voluntarily laid down their arms and surrendered themselves retained the rights of freedom, and were called *Dedititii*; but those taken in the field, or in the storming of cities, were sold by auction (*sub corona*, as it was termed, *Lev. v. 22*, etc., because they wore a crown when sold; or *sub hasta*, because a spear was set up where the crier or auctioneer stood). There was a continual market for slaves at Rome. Those who dealt in that trade brought them thither from various countries. The seller was bound to promise for the soundness of his slaves, and not to conceal their faults. Hence they were commonly exposed to sale naked; and they carried a scroll hanging at their necks, on which their good and bad qualites were specified. If the seller gave a false account, he was bound to make up the loss, or in some cases to take back the slave. Those whom the seller would not warrant were sold with a kind of cap on their head. Those brought from beyond seas had their feet whitened with chalk, and their ears bored. Sometimes slaves were sold on that condition, that if they did not please, they should be returned within a limited time. Foreign slaves, when first brought to the city, were called *Venales*. Slaves who had served long became artful. It was not lawful for free-born citizens among the Romans, as among other nations, to sell themselves for slaves. Much less was it allowed any other person to sell free men. But as this gave occasion to certain frauds, it was ordained by a decree of the senate, that those who allowed themselves to be sold for the sake of sharing the price should remain in slavery. Fathers might, indeed, sell their children for slaves; but these did not, on that account, entirely lose the rights of citizens; for when freed from their slavery, they were held as *Ingenui*, not *Libertini*. The same was the case with insolvent debtors, who were given up as slaves to their creditors. Criminals were often reduced to slavery by way of punishment. Thus, those who had neglected

to get themselves enrolled in the Censor's books, or refused to enlist, had their goods confiscated, and after being scourged were sold beyond the Tiber. Those condemned to the mines, or to fight with wild beasts, or to any extreme punishment, were first deprived of liberty, and by a fiction of law termed slaves of punishment. The children of any female slave became the slaves of her master. There was no regular marriage among slaves, but their connection was called Contubernium. Those slaves who were born in the house of their masters were called Vernæ. These slaves were more petulant than others, because they were commonly more indulged. The whole company of slaves in one house were called Familia. The proprietor of slaves was called Dominus, whence this word was put for a tyrant. On this account Augustus refused the name. Slaves not only did all domestic services, but were likewise employed in various trades and manufactures. Such as had a genius for it were sometimes instructed in literature and the liberal arts. Some of these were sold at a great price. Hence arose a principal part of the immense wealth of Crassus. Slaves employed to accompany boys to and from school were called Pædagogi ; and the part of the house where those young slaves stayed who were instructed in literature was called Pædagogium. Slaves were promoted according to their behaviour ; as, from being a drudge or mean slave in town, to be an overseer in the country. The country farms of the wealthy Romans, in later times, were cultivated chiefly by slaves. But there were also free men who wrought for hire, as among us. Among the Romans, masters had an absolute power over their slaves. They might scourge or put them to death at pleasure. This right was exercised with so great cruelty, especially in the corrupt ages of the republic, that laws were made at different times to restrain it. The lash was the common punishment : but for certain crimes they used to be branded in the forehead, and sometimes were forced to carry a piece of wood round their necks wherever they went, which was called Furca, a yoke ; and whoever had been subjected to this punishment was ever afterwards called Furcifer. A slave that had been often beaten was called Mastigia. A slave who had been branded was called Stigmatias. Slaves, also, by way of punishment, were often shut up in a workhouse, or bridewell, where they were obliged to turn a mill for grinding corn. Persons employed to apprehend and bring back slaves who fled from their masters were called Fugitivarii. When slaves were beaten they used to be suspended with a weight tied to

their feet, that they might not move them. To deter slaves from offending, a thong of a lash made of leather was commonly hung on the staircase ; but this was chiefly applied to younger slaves. Slaves, when punished capitally, were commonly crucified ; but this punishment was prohibited under Constantine. If a master of a family was slain at his own house, and the murderer not discovered, all his domestic slaves were liable to be put to death. Hence we find four hundred in one family punished on this account. Slaves were not esteemed as persons, but as things, and might be transferred from one owner to another, like any other effects. Slaves could not appear as witnesses in a court of justice, nor make a will, nor inherit anything ; but gentle masters allowed them to make a kind of will ; nor could slaves serve as soldiers, unless first made free, except in the time of Hannibal, when, after the battle of Cannæ, eight thousand slaves were armed without being freed. Slaves had a certain allowance granted them for their sustenance, commonly four or five pecks of grain a month, and five *denarii*, which was called their *Menstruum* ; and what they spared of this, or procured by any other means with their master's consent, was called their *Peculium*. This money, with their master's permission, they laid out at interest, or purchased with it a slave for themselves, from whose labours they might make profit. Cicero says that sober and industrious slaves, at least such as became slaves from being captives in war, seldom remained in servitude above six years. At certain times slaves were obliged to make presents to their masters out of their poor savings. There was sometimes an agreement between the master and the slave that when the slave should pay a certain sum the master should be obliged to give him his liberty. Although the state of slaves, in point of right, was the same, yet their condition in families was very different, according to the pleasure of their masters and their different employments. Some were treated with indulgence ; some served in chains, as janitors and door-keepers, others were confined in workhouses below ground. At certain times slaves were allowed the greatest freedom, as at the feast of Saturn, in the month of December, when they were served at table by their masters, and on the Ides of August. The number of slaves in Rome and through Italy was immense. Some rich individuals are said to have had several thousands. Wars were sometimes excited by an insurrection of the slaves. There were also public slaves, who were used for various public services, and especially to attend on the magistrates. Their

condition was much more tolerable than that of private slaves. They had yearly allowances (*Annua*) granted them by the public. There were also persons attached to the soil."—*Adam's Roman Antiquities*.

910.—PHYSICAL CAUSE OF CHRIST'S DEATH.—*John* xix. 34.

The theory set forth by the late Dr. William Stroud, that the physical cause of our Lord's death was rupture of the heart, and consequent effusion of blood into the pericardium, the investing sheath of that organ, has now been almost universally accepted. Our readers may be glad to have the theory as stated by Dr. Stroud himself.

"In the preceding chapter it is presumed to have been demonstrated that neither the ordinary sufferings of crucifixion, nor the wound inflicted by the soldier's spear, nor an unusual degree of weakness, nor the interposition of supernatural influence, was the immediate cause of the Saviour's death. The first of these conditions was inadequate, the second followed instead of preceding the effect, and the third and fourth had no existence. What then, it will be asked, was the real cause ?

"In conformity with the inductive principles announced at the commencement of this inquiry, it must have been a known power in nature, possessing the requisite efficacy, agreeing with all the circumstances of the case, and by suitable tests proved to have been present without counteraction. It will be the object of the ensuing observations to show that the power in which these characters perfectly and exclusively concurred was *agony of mind, producing rupture of the heart*. To establish this conclusion numerous details will be adduced, but the argument itself is short and simple. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ endured mental agony so intense, that had it not been limited by Divine interposition, it would probably have destroyed His life without the aid of any other sufferings ; but, having been thus mitigated, its effects were confined to violent palpitation of the heart, accompanied with bloody sweat. On the cross this agony was renewed, in conjunction with the ordinary sufferings incidental to that mode of punishment ; and having at this time been allowed to proceed to its utmost extremity without restraint, occasioned sudden death by the rupture of the heart, intimated by a discharge of blood and water from His side, when it was afterwards pierced with a spear."

Dr. J. Y. Simpson gives the following medical description

of our Lord's death. "The details left regarding Christ's death are most strikingly peculiar in this respect, that they offer us the result of a very rude dissection, as it were, by the gash made in His side after death by the thrust of the Roman soldier's spear. The effect of that wounding or piercing of the side was an escape of blood and water, visible to the Apostle John, standing some distance off; and I do not believe that anything could possibly account for this appearance as described by that Apostle, except a collection of blood effused into the distended sac of the pericardium in consequence of rupture of the heart, and afterwards separated, as is usual with *extravasated blood*, into those two parts, viz. (1) crassamentum, or red clot; and (2) watery serum. The subsequent puncture from below of the distended pericardial sac would most certainly lead, under such circumstances, to the immediate ejection and escape of its sanguineous contents in the form of red clots of blood and a stream of watery serum, exactly corresponding to that description given in the sacred narrative, "and forthwith came there out blood and water," an appearance which no other natural event or mode of death can explain or account for."

911.—AHRIMAN AND SATAN.—*Isaiah* xlvi. 7.

The great Persian reformer, Zoroaster, or Zerduscht, taught that there are two principles working in the universe, one good, the other evil. The one was termed Ormuzd, and was the presiding agent of all good; the other, Ahriman, in the same manner presided over all evil. From the opposing action of these two powers Zoroaster explained the commingling of good and evil in the universe and in every creature.

It would seem natural for us to compare this Persian Ahriman with our Scriptural Satan, and many have thought that the two might be regarded as identical. Kitto, however, urges the distinctness of the conceptions represented by these two names in the following passage. "In Ahriman the reference may have sought to embody, so far as Zoroaster understood them, the old patriarchal traditions concerning the great enemy of man. But there is a vast and awful difference. Ahriman is not, like Satan, a creature of God, fallen from the high estate which he held once, and exercising his fearful ministry only through the advantage which the sin of man has given to him, and that only for an appointed time, and under the sufferance of One whose power could crush him in a moment,—Ahriman, on the contrary, is a principle, co-ordinate

with the author of good, equally with him possessing the power of creation, though differently exercised ; waging with him an equal and doubtful conflict, and destined to be ultimately vanquished through an advantage on the part of his opponent, of which the system appears to have deprived himself, for no other reason than that he might thereby be in the end overcome."

912.—SWIFT AND READY COOKING.—*Gen. xviii. 7, 8.*

Robinson says in his Book of Travels :—“We remained nearly an hour upon this interesting spot, where all that is now to be seen lies within a very narrow compass. Meantime several flocks of goats came up for water ; or perhaps, because their keepers wished to get a nearer view of the strangers. After some chaffering, we bought a kid for our Arabs ; intending to give them a good supper, inasmuch as we were approaching the end of our journey. . . . Our Arabs quickly slaughtered the poor goat ; and the different portions were speedily in the process of cooking at different fires. This time they had no guests, bidden or unbidden, to interrupt the full enjoyment of their savoury repast. Such, probably, in kind was the ‘savoury meat’ which Isaac loved ; and with which, in this very neighbourhood, Jacob enticed from him the blessing intended for his elder brother. Our Haweity guide had brought along his family, with two or three camels ; and to them the offals of the kid were abandoned. I looked in upon this feast, and found the women boiling the stomach and entrails, which they had merely cleaned by stripping them with the hand, without washing ; while the head, unskinned and unopened, was roasting underneath in the embers of a fire made chiefly of camel’s dung. With such a meal our Tawarah would hardly have been content. Indeed, all the Bedawin we had yet met with out of the peninsula—the ‘Amrán, the Haiwát, the Haweitát, and the Tiyâhah—were obviously upon a lower scale of civilisation than the Tawarah ; and seemed little, if any, farther removed from savage life than the Red Indian of the American wilds.”

913.—AMEN.—*Deut. xxvii. 15.*

It is very curious and interesting that all the Hymns found in the third book of Chaldaean Magic close with an Accadian word, *kakama*, which is represented in Assyrian as *amanu*, and is precisely the *Amen* with which we are accustomed to close our prayers and hymns.

The word “Amen,” which expresses concurrence in the prayers of another, was used in the services of the synagogue, and was transferred unchanged in the very earliest age of the Church to the Christian services.

The Hebrew word is an adverb, meaning *truly, verily*; and it is formed from the verb *amān*, to prop, or stay; intransitive, to be stayed up, to be firm, or faithful. Its proper use is when one person confirms the words of another, and expresses a wish for the issue of his vows, predictions, or plans.

“The formula of consecration in the Holy Eucharist is in most ancient liturgies ordered to be said aloud, and the people respond aloud, Amen.” Justinian distinctly ordered the consecration formula to be said aloud in order that the people might respond Amen at its termination. “In most Greek liturgies also, when the priest in administering says, ‘Soma Christou,’ the receiver answers, ‘Amen.’”

914.—THE MILDNESS OF MOSAISM.—*Lev. xix. 18.*

By unduly dwelling on certain severe requirements which belong wholly to the judicial side of Mosaism, its general character has been much misrepresented, and the teaching of Moses has been set in needless contrast with the teaching of Christ.

Moses never taught malignity in any case. There is nothing in his writings like the statement which he is sometimes declared to have made—“Thou shalt hate thine enemy.” Not only did Moses not say such a thing, but he said exactly the opposite. “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” “If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born with you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” “If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him” (*Lev. xix. 18, 33, 34 ; Ex. xxiii. 4, 5*). It would be easy to fill many a paragraph with texts corresponding in spirit to those above cited. See nearly the whole of the nineteenth chapter of *Leviticus*, and the texts there pointed out in any good reference Bible. Neither Christ nor Paul nor James could find any words breathing a kindlier or more loving spirit than those of Moses.

Moses' law of retaliation has been grossly misunderstood. The rule, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," has been taken away from its connection, and made to declare the general principle of Mosaism. The whole law is given in Ex. xxi. 22—25, and on it the following explanatory remarks may be made.

1. It has nothing to do with private revenge; but is expressly said to be a rule "for the judges." 2. It is a good rule—a just rule. He who intentionally maims or wounds another, deserves at the hand of the law the very evil he inflicts on others. 3. If the injured party insisted on the infliction of a penalty, the magistrate had no option; but at the request of the man who had received the wrong, the whole penalty might be suspended, or a lighter punishment inflicted. To all this there can be no objection on the score of justice and right.

There is no reason whatever for saying that Moses encouraged private or personal revenge.

915.—BULL COFFINS AT SAHHARA.—*Hosea viii. 5, 6.*

The Israelites learned the worship of the bull, or calf, from the Egyptians. The Egyptian bull was called *Apis*; it was perfectly black, without a single white spot, except maybe on the forehead, and one or two other permitted parts. Whenever a bull of this description was met with he was covered with ornaments and taken by the people into the temple with unbounded acclamations and other expressions of joy; and to such an extent was their veneration for the animal carried that on his death he was embalmed and deposited in a sarcophagus.

Gadsby gives the following note:—"The sarcophagi and tombs in which the sacred bulls were embalmed next had my attention. If there be one wonder in Egypt greater than another, the pyramids alone excepted, it is to be seen in the dark chambers of the sacred bulls. They have only been discovered within the last three or four years.

"Descending a steep path, and having lighted our candles, we came to an avenue or street about three hundred yards long. On each side of this avenue are spacious chambers, and in each of these chambers is a sarcophagus, in which a bull had been deposited. The sarcophagi, thirty-three of which have been found, are all of hard granite beautifully polished. They are not all exactly of a size, but average about ten feet or twelve feet long, by six feet wide and six feet deep, and each

is supposed to weigh about sixty-five tons. Two of them are covered with hieroglyphics. The labour required for the cutting and carrying from the quarries of these immense blocks, and the skill and labour necessary to their being formed and polished, exceed all possible calculation.

"These chambers had been discovered by a Frenchman, but it is evident that the Saracens had been there before him, as the massive lids were partially removed, and the bulls taken away and stripped of their ornaments. The whole district is strewed with bleached bones and mummy rags."

916.—HEAPS FOR WAYMARKS.—*Jer. xxxi. 21.*

Bonar well illustrates this passage:—"We rode off about nine, through a fine large plain, but quite a plain of the desert—no stream, no verdure; at first soft sand, then hard gravel, then stones, and all these generally of a white colour. *Ras Atakah* towered upon our right, full in the morning sunshine. No trace of a road appeared, for though the camels do form a track, or rather a number of parallel tracks, yet the drifting sand obliterates them, or washes them out. Still the *waymarks* are visible everywhere,—consisting of small heaps of stones set up on each side, which are carefully preserved by the Bedaween; for even *they* might at times be at a loss as to the way, so great is the sameness of the region for miles on every hand. Jeremiah's words came into mind, 'Set thee up *waymarks*, make thee high heaps, set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest' (chap. xxxi. 21). The sand does not seem to obliterate these, or, if it does, they are renewed from time to time. They were always a welcome sight to us, assuring us that we were in the right track, for at times we began to ask whether even our Arabs were sure of their way, so waste did the desert appear, without a mark or a foot-trace of any kind whatsoever."

917.—ANCIENT ORACLES.—*2 Sam. xvi. 23.*

Of the different nations of antiquity none were more famous for oracles than Egypt and Greece, where they existed in great numbers, among which were those of Jupiter Ammon, at Thebes and Ammonium, and those at Dodona and Delphi, the last of which became the most celebrated, and, consequently, the most frequented of all. With the exception of the Cumæan Sibyl, the Sibylline books, and a few others, the Romans had no domestic oracles, but availed themselves, on particular occasions, of the Egyptian and Grecian.

They were resorted to on all state occasions of any consequence—on the commencement of war or the conclusion of peace, the founding of cities and colonies, the establishment of religious ceremonies, the enactment of laws, the introduction of new forms of government, or the prevalence of any public calamity. They were also consulted by individuals of different ranks of society in reference to any subject in which they felt peculiarly interested. It is obviously to their influence we are to ascribe most of the sudden revolutions and other remarkable occurrences which happened in the states of antiquity, but which cannot be traced either to the councils of political wisdom or to the power of arms. The response of a god frequently effected what the impulse of merely human motives never could have accomplished.

Sometimes the oracular responses were professedly given by the gods themselves; at other times they were imparted by priests and priestesses, who acted as interpreters. Those who consulted them were obliged previously to present valuable offerings and sacrifices. They were, as in the case of the Delphic oracle, minutely interrogated as to their private history and their expectations; they were then conducted into a dismal cavern, where they were exposed to a damp and noxious air, and were sometimes required to drink a potion, the effect of which on the imagination tended to complete their melancholy and stupefaction, and thus prepare them for becoming the dupes of an artful superstition. When no difficulty clogged the question which required an answer, the language of the oracle was clear and explicit, but in cases of a complicated and doubtful character the response was proportionately equivocal. In cases of extreme difficulty, when the very existence of the oracle was at stake, no answer whatever could be obtained. Great management is apparent in all the measures connected with their consultation.

918.—HARVEST FLOODS OF JORDAN.—*Jos. iii. 15.*

It does not appear that at any time now the floods of the river Jordan rise to the height which many expressions of Scripture would seem to imply that they reached in ancient times. The “swellings of Jordan” in those days were such as to drive the wild beast from his lair amid the reeds and thickets by the river side. Hence the language in Jeremiah xlix. 19. Several causes have probably combined to hinder the river from reaching so high a level now. In the course of ages the rapid stream can hardly have failed to scoop out for itself a

deeper bed ; and the cutting down of the woods that once clothed both the Jordan valley and the adjacent hills must have led to a more rapid evaporation of the moisture from the scorched and naked soil, and possibly also to a diminution of the quantity of rain that falls.

919.—BACKS TOWARD THE TEMPLE.—*Ezekiel viii. 16.*

“Ezekiel, then a captive by the river Chebar, sees in a vision the abominations which are at that time in the course of being perpetrated at Jerusalem. After seeing these—‘the image of jealousy,’ the ‘chambers of imagery,’ and the ‘women weeping for Tammuz’ at the holy gate—it is said to the prophet : ‘Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.’ He turned accordingly, ‘and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, *with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east* ; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.’

“To understand this clearly it should be observed that, as if purposely to prevent the abomination referred to, the entrance of the temple was on the east side of the building, so that, in looking towards it in worship, the worshippers necessarily turned their backs upon the sun at its rising in the east, at which time the luminary was most usually worshipped. But the law of sun-worship required the face to be turned towards the sun at its rising ; and the men seen by the prophet being thus precluded from seeming to worship the Lord when they really paid their homage to the sun, and being obliged to make their choice, chose to turn their backs to the temple, and their faces to the sun, rather than their backs to the sun and their faces to the temple.”—*Kitto.*

920.—OLD WOMEN AT ENDOR.—*1 Sam. xxviii. 7.*

As we approached Endor we could fancy the very walk which Saul took over the eastern shoulder of the hill to reach the witch’s abode, skirting Little Hermon, on the front slopes of which the Philistines were encamped, in order to reach the village behind them ; a long and weary distance from his own army by the fountain of Jezreel, on the side of Gilboa. It might be fancy, but the place has a strange, weird-like aspect ; a miserable village on the north side of the hill, without a tree or a shrub to relieve the squalor of its decaying heaps. It is full of caves, and the mud-built hovels are stuck on to the sides of the rocks in clusters, and are for the most part a mere continuation or enlargement of the cavern behind, which forms

the larger portion of the human den. The inhabitants were the most filthy and ragged we had seen ; and as the old crones, startled at the rare apparition of strangers strolling near their holes, came forth and cursed us, a Holman Hunt might have immortalised on canvas the very features of the necromancer of Israel. Endor has shrunk from its former extent ; and there are many caves around, with crumbling heaps at their mouths, the remains, probably, of what once were other habitations.—*Tristram*.

921.—THE PERIL OF THE EMPTY HOUSE.

Matt. xii. 43—45.

A notion prevailed in Chaldæa which presents a striking similarity to that appealed to by our Lord in this parable of the evil spirit returning to possess the empty house. It was thought that when once the possessing demons were expelled from the body, the only guarantee against their return was to obtain, by the power of incantations, an opposite possession by a favourable demon. A good spirit must take the place of the evil one in the body of the man. This is part of one of their incantations :

“ May the bad demons depart ! May they seize upon one another !
The propitious demon
The propitious giant,
May they penetrate into his body ! ”

922.—THE KING’S GATE.—*Ezek. xliv. 2, 3.*

We are told by Chardin, amongst other instances of the extreme distance and profound awe with which Eastern majesty is treated, that it is a common custom in Persia that when a great man has built a palace, he treats the king and his grandees in it for several days, then the great gate of it is open ; but when these festivities are over, they shut it up, never more to be opened.

Caron, also, in his account of Japan, tells us that whenever any of the chief nobles builds a new palace, he causes an entrance to be made for common use, and also one which is more elegant, adorned with carvings from top to bottom, varnished and gilt. This is covered over with planks, in order that it may not be damaged either by the sun or by the rain ; and it remains thus covered till the emperor goes to feast in the new-built palace. As soon as he has passed in and out of it, it is again shut and covered up, nor is it either opened or uncovered again, except upon a like occasion ; because no one may enjoy the honour of treading on the same

threshold with the emperor : whilst at the same time it would be considered as derogatory to his majesty to pass over one that had been worn. In the words of the text, "This gate shall be shut. It is for the prince."

The sovereign of Japan seldom pays more than one visit to the same house during his life. Whole years are employed in making preparations for his visit. All the articles of furniture are adorned with the arms of the empire, in carved work, in painting, or in embroidery. After the imperial feast they are put by, and are never again used. They are preserved like precious jewels, in remembrance of the honour done to that house by the sovereign in appearing at table in it. He is invited three years beforehand ; and the interval is not the least too long to issue the necessary orders, and pay due attention that nothing may be wanting.

Such an entertainment is of considerable importance, and occasions no little stir. It continues for three months for all the nobles and courtiers, for whom, from the day that the emperor dined there, open table is held daily. In this way the erection of a new castle, and the feast which the monarch deigns to celebrate there, with the consequences of it, are enough to ruin a king. And, in fact, some of them, and many of the great men ruin themselves by it.—*Bib. Treasury.*

923.—GODS LIKE THEIR WORSHIPPERS.—*Psalm cxv. 8.*

A somewhat extreme, but strikingly illustrative instance of making gods like themselves is found in an account given of the Hindoos of Dacca. They were visited with the disease known as the *small-pox*, which proved exceedingly fatal among them. They consequently invented a goddess of the malady, whom they represented as a white woman covered with spots. And they besought this small-pox goddess to turn away the affliction from them. This instance may suggest the origin of many idol-divinities.

924.—EASTERN STEWARDS.—*Luke xvi: 1—9.*

Roberts well illustrates this familiar parable by his sketches of life in India :—

" Nearly all the respectable families have a steward. He is sometimes one who has been a master himself ; or he is a relation, or has been selected on account of former services. His pay is often a mere trifle ; and sometimes he has not any stipulated salary, but derives perquisites according to the extent of

his master's dealings. Should there be money to give out on loan he always demands from the borrower a certain percentage ; and the least demur will cause him to say, ' You cannot have the money. I have many other applications.' Is the produce of the lands to be disposed of, he again squeezes something out of the purchaser, and if possible out of his master into the bargain. Has he anything to buy for the house, he grinds the face of the dealer, and demands a handsome present for the custom. Does he pay the servants or labourers, they must each dole out a trifle from their monthly or daily stipend. He never gives out goods or money without taking a bond or a ' bill,' which is sometimes written by the debtor, and always has his signature. Sometimes he brings false bonds and counterfeit jewels, and gives out large sums of money ; and when his accomplices have decamped, he pretends to be of all men the most astonished at their villany ! When detected, he has generally a good store of his own filthy lucre ; but should he not have succeeded, he would sooner starve than work, for the latter would be a mortal disgrace to a man of his rank ! Even common beggars sometimes remind us of the passage, ' I cannot dig.' Religious mendicants swarm in every part of the East ; and when you advise them to work, they cast upon you a contemptuous scowl, and walk off in great dudgeon, exclaiming, ' We work ! we never have done such a thing : we are not able : you are joking, my lord !'"

925.—THE LEARNING OF THE CHALDÆANS.—*Dan.* i. 4.

The following is one of the simplest formulæ used in the Chaldaean magic. It will give a distinct impression of that magical system with which Israel came in contact during its captivity. This is a conjuration against the seven subterraneous demons, called Maskim, which were regarded as among the most formidable of the spirits.

"They are seven ! they are seven !
in the depths of the ocean, they are seven !
in the brilliancy of the heavens, they are seven !
They proceed from the ocean depths, from the hidden retreat.
They are neither male nor female,
those who stretch themselves out like chains.
They have no spouse, they do not produce children ;
they are strangers to benevolence ;
they listen neither to prayers nor wishes.
Vermin come forth from the mountain,
Enemies of the god Hea,
they are the agents of the vengeance of the gods,
raising up difficulties, obtaining power by violence.

The Enemies ! the enemies !
 they are seven ! they are seven ! they are twice seven !
 Spirit of the heavens, may they be conjured !
 Spirit of the earth, may they be conjured !

926.—THRESHING INSTRUMENTS.—*Isaiah* xli. 15.

The “threshing instruments” are flat, heavy, wooden slabs, some five feet long by three wide, slightly turned up in front. The under surface is thickly studded with nobs of hard stone or iron. A massive prison door, with its rows of projecting nail heads, will give the best idea of a *mowrej*, as the instrument is now called. Each is drawn by a “yoke of oxen.” The driver stands on the *mowrej*, urging the oxen on with his formidable ox-goad. The oxen advance in front, “treading out” the grain, and the *mowrej* follows, crushing and cutting the straw with its “teeth,” till it is reduced almost to dust.—*Porter.*

927.—PUBLIC FEELING AGAINST POLYGAMY.—*1 Tim.* iii. 2.

Kitto says :—The extent to which public feeling is against polygamy, especially among the women themselves, may be judged of from a curious native book, on *The Customs and Manners of the Women in Persia*, translated for the Oriental Translation Fund, by James Atkinson, Esq.

In this we read, “That man is to be praised who confines himself to one wife ; for if he takes two it is wrong, and he will certainly repent of his folly. Thus say the seven wise women :—

“Be that man’s life immersed in gloom
 Who weds more wives than one ;
 With one his cheeks retain their bloom,
 His voice a cheerful tone ;
 These speak his honest heart at rest,
 And he and she are always blest.
 But when with two he seeks for joy,
 Together they his soul annoy ;
 With two no sunbeam of delight
 Can make his day of misery bright.”

928.—CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOOD.—*Acts* x. 14, 15.

“Amongst the Arabs at the present time the eating of swine’s flesh is strictly forbidden. The unwholesome effects of that meat in a hot climate would be a sufficient reason for the prohibition ; but the pig is held in abhorrence by the Muslim chiefly on account of its extremely filthy habits. Most animals prohibited for food by the Mosaic law are alike forbidden to the Muslim. The camel is an exception. The

Muslim is ‘forbidden to eat that which dieth of itself ; and blood, and swine’s flesh, and that on which the name of any beside God hath been invoked ; and that which hath been strangled, or killed by a blow, or by a fall, or by the horns of another beast ; and that which hath been partly eaten by a wild beast, except what he shall himself kill ; and that which hath been sacrificed unto idols.’ An animal that is killed for the food of man must be slaughtered in a particular manner : the person who is about to perform the operation must say, ‘In the name of God : God is most great,’ and then cut its throat at the part next the head, taking care to divide the windpipe, gullet, and carotid arteries, unless it be a camel, in which case he should *stab* the throat at the part next the breast. It is forbidden to utter, in slaughtering an animal, the phrase which is so often made use of on other occasions, ‘In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,’ because the mention of the most benevolent epithets of the Deity on such an occasion would seem like a mockery of the sufferings which it is about to endure. Some persons in Egypt, but mostly women, when about to kill an animal for food, say, ‘In the name of God : God is most great : God give thee patience to endure the affliction which He hath allotted thee.’ If the sentiment which first dictated this prayer were always felt, it would present a beautiful trait in the character of the people who use it. In cases of necessity, when in danger of starving, the Muslim is allowed to eat any food which is unlawful under other circumstances. The mode of slaughter above described is, of course, only required to be practised in the cases of domestic animals. Most kinds of fish are lawful food : so, too, are many birds, the tame kinds of which must be killed in the same manner as cattle ; but the wild may be shot. The hare, rabbit, gazelle, etc., are lawful food, and may either be shot (as birds may be) or killed by a dog, provided the name of God was uttered at the time of discharging the arrow, etc., or slipping the dog, and he (the dog) has not eaten any part of the prey. This animal, however, is considered very unclean. Sháfe’ees hold themselves to be polluted by the touch of its nose, if it be wet ; and if any part of their clothes be so touched, they must wash that part with seven waters, and once with clean earth : some others are only careful not to let the animal lick, or defile in a worse manner, their persons or their dress, etc. When game has been struck down by any weapon, but not killed, its throat must be immediately cut ; otherwise it is unlawful food.”—*Lane’s Modern Egyptians.*

929.—OIL CARRIED TO EGYPT.—*Hosea* xii. 1.

In this case the oil was part of a bribe sent by the Israelites to the Egyptians in the hope of inducing them to help Israel in the time of her distress. But it may further be noticed that oil was an important article of commerce with Egypt, as the oil-olive does not thrive in Egypt. Along the Nile the avenues are of mulberry, sycamore, and acacia trees. In Greece the avenues are formed of the olives; and in Palestine the olives were abundant enough to make olive oil an article of export.

930.—SPREADING THE SKIRT OVER.—*Ezek.* xvi. 8.

In this passage the prophet, in describing the Jewish Church as an exposed infant, dwells upon the care of God in bringing her up with great tenderness, and then, at the proper time, marrying her. This symbolical act of "spreading the skirt" over being to the present day the sign of taking a woman under protection by marrying her. Roberts notices a similar ceremony in India.

"I have been delighted at the marriage ceremonies of the Hindoos, to see amongst them the same interesting custom. The bride is seated on a throne, surrounded by matrons, wearing her veil, her gayest robes, and most valuable jewels. After the *thali* has been tied round her neck, the bridegroom approaches her with a silken skirt (purchased by himself), and folds it round her several times over the rest of her clothes. This part of the ceremony often produces powerful emotions on all present. The parents on both sides give their benedictions.

"A common way of saying 'He has married her,' is, 'He has given her the *koori*',—has spread the skirt over her. There are, however, those who throw a long robe over the shoulders of the bride instead of putting on the skirt.

"An angry husband sometimes says to his wife, 'Give me back my skirt,' meaning that he wishes to have the marriage compact dissolved. So the mother-in-law, should the new daughter not treat her respectfully, says, 'My son gave this woman the *koori* (skirt), and has made her respectable, but she neglects me.'"

931.—A SHERD TO TAKE FIRE IN.—*Isaiah* xxx. 14.

This allusion may be seen illustrated every morning in the East. Should the good woman's fire have been extinguished

in the night, she takes a potsherd in the morning, and goes to a neighbour for a little fire to rekindle her own ; and as she goes along, she may be seen, after proceeding a few steps, now and then blowing the burning embers, lest the small spark should expire.

The Jews were not to have a sherd out of which they could drink a little water. Pumps not being in general use in the East, the natives are obliged to have something in which to convey water from the well or tank. Of a very poor country it is said, “In those parts there is not a sherd out of which you can drink a little water.” “The wretchedness of the people is so great, they have not a sherd with which to take water from the tank.—*Roberts.*

932.—CUTTING OFF THE HAIR A SIGN OF GRIEF.
Jeremiah xvi. 6.

This ancient practice—referred to in the passage as “making themselves bald”—has disappeared in a great measure from western Asia. “That it was forbidden to his followers by Mohammed is one reason ; but a better is, that the men have no hair upon their heads that they can demolish, it being the universal custom to shave the hair of the head. The women, however, who continue to wear their hair long, do not indeed shave their heads, but often tear out their hair by handfuls on such occasions. Among the Greeks, who anciently, as now, wore their hair, the custom of tearing, cutting off, or shaving the hair, was at least as common as among the Jews. With them the hair, thus separated from the head, was sometimes laid upon the corpse as a tribute of affection and regret ; sometimes it was cast upon the funeral pile, to be consumed with the remains of the deceased ; and on other occasions it was laid upon the grave. In times of great public mourning this ceremony was extended even to the beasts ; and on the deaths of men of high note, it was not unusual for whole cities to be shaven. These and other ideas and sentiments connected with the hair owe their significance not only to the fact that this is a graceful ornament to the body, the neglect or demolition of which, therefore, implies that disregard of ornament which properly belongs to grief, but that the hair is a living part of the body—part of a man’s self, which yet may be separated without pain—and which has this peculiar quality, that it is not, like other parts of the body, subjected in the lapse of time to change or decay. It is this latter circumstance

which causes the hair to be so much employed as a memorial of affection.”—*Kitto.*

933.—BUILDINGS IN ANCIENT EPHESUS, ETC.
1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

“In such cities as Ephesus, where this letter was written, or Corinth, to which it was addressed, there was a signal difference (far greater than in modern European cities) between the gorgeous splendour of the great public buildings and the meanness and squalor of those streets where the poor and profligate resided. The former were constructed of marble and granite; the capitals of their columns and their roofs were richly decorated with silver and gold; the latter were mean structures, run up with boards for walls, with straw in the interstices and thatch on the top. This is the contrast on which St. Paul seizes, . . . not as sometimes the passage is treated, as though the picture presented were that of a dunghill of straw and sticks, with jewels, such as diamonds and emeralds, among the rubbish. He then points out that a day will come when the fire will burn up those wretched edifices of wood and straw, and leave unharmed in their glorious beauty those that were raised of marble and granite and decorated with silver and gold, as the temples of Corinth itself survived the conflagration of Mummius, which burnt the hovels around.”—*Houssion.*

934.—HIS BLOOD ON HIM.—*Hosea xii. 14.*

The imprecation “His blood be upon him,” was an ordinary expression of the Jews, when a man had been lawfully put to death, and was used to declare that they were not guilty of his blood. The blood which was found on the sword was sometimes wiped on the head of the slain; which circumstance may perhaps explain the expression. The extreme infatuation of the party that were determined to secure the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in this, they reversed their ordinary imprecation, and exclaimed, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

935.—THE CAMEL.—*Gen. xxiv. 64.*

This animal being so frequently referred to in Scripture, and so necessary to life in the East, a full description of its habits may be interesting to our readers. We take our account from M. Huc’s very interesting volumes.

The training of the young camel is a business requiring great

care and attention. For the first week of its life it can neither stand, nor suck, without some helping hand. Its long neck is then of such excessive flexibility and fragility, that it runs the risk of dislocating it, unless some one is at hand to sustain the head while it sucks the teat of its dam. You never see the young camel playing and frolicking about, as you see kids, colts, and other young animals. It is always grave, melancholy, and slow in its movements, which it never hastens, unless under compulsion. In the night, and often in the day also, it sends forth a mournful cry, like that of an infant in pain.

The maturation of the camel is a long affair. It cannot carry even a single rider until its third year ; and it is not in full vigour until it is eight years old. Its trainers then begin to try it with loads, gradually heavier and heavier. If it can rise with its burden, this is a proof that it can carry it throughout the journey. When that journey is only of brief duration, they sometimes load the animal in excess, and then they aid it to rise by means of bars and levers. The camel's capacity for labour endures for a long time. Providing that at certain periods of the year it is allowed a short holiday for pasturing at its leisure, it will continue its service for fully fifty years.

Nature has provided the camel with no means of defence against other animals, unless you may so consider its piercing, prolonged cry, and its huge, shapeless, ugly frame, which resembles, at a distance, a heap of ruins. It seldom kicks, and when it does, it almost as seldom inflicts any injury. Its soft, fleshy foot cannot wound, or even bruise you ; neither can the camel bite an antagonist. In fact, its only practical means of defence against man or beast is a sort of vehement sneeze, wherewith it discharges, from nose and mouth, a mass of filth against the object which it seeks to intimidate or to annoy.

The awkward aspect of the camel, the excessive stench of its breath, its heavy, ungraceful movements, its projecting hare-lips, the callosities which disfigure various parts of its body, all contribute to render its appearance repulsive : yet its extreme gentleness and docility, and the services it renders to man, make it of pre-eminent utility, and lead us to forget its deformity.

Notwithstanding the apparent softness of its feet, the camel can walk upon the most rugged ground, upon sharp flints, or thorns, or roots of trees, without wounding itself. But if too long a journey is continuously imposed upon it, if after a certain march you do not give it a few day's rest the outer

skin wears off, the flesh is bared, and the blood flows. Under such distressing circumstances, the Tartars make sheepskin shoes for it, but this assistance is unavailing without rest ; for if you attempt to compel the camel to proceed, it lies down, and you are compelled either to remain with or to abandon it.

There is nothing which the camel so dreads as wet, marshy ground. The instant it places its feet upon anything like mud it slips and slides, and generally, after staggering about like a drunken man, falls heavily on its side.

936.—KID IN HIS MOTHER'S MILK.—*Deut. xiv. 21.*

Dr. Thomson gives the fullest explanation of this prohibition, which evidently depends on familiar local customs, which became an occasion of mischief.

“ While on the subject of cooking, take another favourite dish of the Arabs. They select a young kid, fat and tender, dress it carefully, and then stew it in milk, mixed with onions and hot spices, such as they relish. They call it *Lebn immū*—‘ Kid in his mother’s milk.’ The Jews, however, will not eat it. They say that Moses specifically forbade it in the above precept, which he repeated three times, and with special emphasis. They further maintain that it is unnatural and barbarous to cook a poor kid in that from which it derives its life. This may have been one reason for the prohibition ; many of the Mosaic precepts are evidently designed to cultivate gentle and humane feelings ; but ‘ kid in his mother’s milk’ is a gross, unwholesome dish, calculated also to kindle up animal and ferocious passions ; and on these accounts Moses may have forbidden it. Besides, it is even yet associated with immoderate feasting ; and originally, I suspect, was connected with idolatrous sacrifices. A great deal of learning has been spent upon this passage by critics, to ascertain what the lawgiver referred to ; but after seeing the dish actually prepared, and hearing the very name given to it which Moses employs, we have the whole mystery explained. I have repeatedly tasted *Lebn immū* ; and, when well prepared, it has a rich and agreeable flavour.”

Dr. Cudworth, in his treatise on the Lord’s Supper, states, that in an old Karaite commentary on the Pentateuch, it is mentioned as having been a practice of the ancient heathens, when they had gathered in all their fruits, to take a kid, and boil it in the milk of its dam, and then in a magical way to go about and besprinkle with it their trees, fields, gardens and

orchards ; thinking that, by this means, they would fructify and bring forth fruit more abundantly the following year.

937.—EASTERN CAMEL PROVERBS.—*Matt. xix. 24.*

The camel is the subject of many proverbial expressions among Eastern nations, and on two occasions our Lord used these familiar proverbs. (*Matt. xix. 24 ; xxiii. 24*). The following are interesting specimens. The Arabs say : “Men are like camels ; not one in a hundred is a dromedary”—a proverb evidently referring to the scarcity of good men. “I have filled them with wine, but they take pleasure in camel’s milk”—spoken, probably, of those who prefer inferior things to good ones. “Fruit is found in a well, and on a camel’s back.” That is, the man who draws from the well, mounts his camel, and waters his land, finds produce.

The Jews say : “There are many old camels which carry the skins of young ones”—that is, to the market, to be sold. “In Media the camel dances in a wine-cask”—spoken of travellers who deal in the marvellous. “The camel went to seek for horns, and lost his ears”—spoken, in reference to the small size of the camel’s ears, of a man who seeking an apparent advantage has lost a real one. Talmudical writers apply this proverb to Balaam, who, coveting the rewards and honours of Balak, lost the gift of prophecy.

Similar proverbs to that of the camel passing through the needle’s eye, as denoting anything unusual or impossible, are found still in the East. Lightfoot gives the following : “In a discourse about dreams, to intimate that they do not exhibit things of which the mind had no previous conception, it is said, ‘They do not show a golden palm-tree, or an elephant passing through the eye of a needle.’ To one who had related something very absurd or incredible, it was said, ‘Perhaps thou art one of the Pombeditha (a Jewish school at Babylon), who can make an elephant go through the eye of a needle.’ So, too, in the Koran, ‘Until the camel shall enter the needle’s eye,’ or *ear*, in Arabic.—*Bib. Ed.*

938.—COMPASSED WITH BEES.—*Psalm cxviii. 12.*

A very remarkable incident, illustrating the figure used by the Psalmist, is found in the *Life of Dr. John Wilson*, of Bombay. He writes : “As Mr. Henderson (a fellow-missionary) and I were engaged with a few friends and some of the pupils in making researches into the natural history and antiquities of the island of Salsette, we were attacked by an immense cloud

of wild bees. Mr. Henderson, who was the first to be stung, soon sank on one of the jungle-roads in the hopeless attempt to guard himself from injury ; and he had lain for about forty minutes in a state of almost total insensibility before he was found by our friends and any relief could be extended to him. It was on my joining him from behind, when he first gave the alarm, that I came in contact with the thousands of infuriated insects. I sprang into a bush for shelter, but there I got no adequate covering from their onset. In my attempt to free myself from agony and entanglement I slid over a precipice, tearing both my clothes and my body among the thorns in the rapid descent of about forty feet. From the number of bees which still encompassed me, and multiplied upon me, and my inability to move from them, I had a pretty strong impression upon my mind that unless God Himself especially interposed on my behalf, all my wanderings and journeyings must then have terminated, though by the humblest agency. That interposition I experienced. I had kept hold of the pillow with which I had come to Mr. Henderson, and tearing it open on the bushes when I was unable to rise, I found within it, most unexpectedly, about a couple of square yards of blanket. In the circumstances, it was like a sheet sent down from heaven to cover my head ; and partially protected by it, I lay till the bees left me. The illustration used by the Psalmist, ‘They compassed me about like bees,’ has now an intensity and appropriateness of meaning to me which I never before realised.”

939.—EAGLES WITH THEIR YOUNG.—*Deut. xxxii. 11.*

Sir Humphrey Davy writes : “I once saw a very interesting sight above one of the crags of Ben Nevis, as I was going in the pursuit of black game. Two parent eagles were teaching their offspring, two young birds, the manœuvres of flight. They began by rising from the top of a mountain in the eye of the sun. It was about mid-day, and bright for this climate. They at first made small circles, and the young birds imitated them. They paused on their wings, waiting till they had made their first flight, and then took a second and larger gyration, always rising towards the sun, and enlarging their circle of flight, so as to make a gradually extending spiral. The young ones still slowly followed, apparently flying better as they mounted ; and they continued this sublime kind of exercise, always rising, till they became mere points in the air, and

the young ones were lost, and afterwards their parents, to our aching sight."

940.—Tabor.—*Jeremiah xlvi. 18.*

"On one occasion I went up directly from Debûrieh with my aneroid, and found the ascent from Esdraelon to be thirteen hundred and forty-five feet. I had formerly made the base of the mountain about 400 feet higher than the Bay of Acre, and the entire elevation, therefore, is not far from eighteen hundred feet. The southern face of Tabor is limestone rock, nearly naked; but the northern is clothed to the top with a forest of oak and terebinth, mingled with the beautiful mock-orange (*Syringa*). The road (if road it may be called) winds up through them, and notwithstanding the experience of other travellers, I have always found it difficult, and in some parts actually dangerous. The mount is entirely composed of cretaceous limestone, as are the hills west and north of it, but all to the east is volcanic. I have never seen a picture of it that was perfectly satisfactory, although every artist who comes in sight of it is sure to make a sketch. Their views differ widely, owing mainly to the points whence they are taken. Seen from the south or north, Tabor describes nearly an arc of a great circle; from the east it is a broad truncated cone rounded off at the top; from the west it is well shaped, rising to a moderate height above the neighbouring hills. Its true figure is an elongated oval, the longitudinal diameter running nearly east and west. The most impressive view, perhaps, is from the plain between it and Endor."—*Thompson.*

941.—EARLY CHURCH REFERENCES TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.
1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

It is somewhat strange that in consulting the writings of the Apostolical Fathers, no mention is found of the Lord's Supper by Barnabas, Polycarp, or Clement of Rome, but only in the writings of Ignatius is there any reference to the subject, and even supposing the passages to be genuine, which has been doubted, the allusions are slight and very general. Most of the early apologists for Christianity also are silent as to this ordinance. Justin Martyr, however, (A.D. 140) has given two descriptions of the ordinance in nearly the same words: "On Sunday," he says, "we all assemble in one place, both those who live in the city and they who dwell in the country, and the writings of apostles and prophets are read so long

as the time permits. When the reader stops, the president of the assembly makes an address, in which he recapitulates the glorious things that have been read, and exhorts the people to follow them. Then we all stand up together and pray. After prayer, bread, wine, and water, are brought in. The president of the meeting again prays according to his ability, and gives thanks, to which the people respond, Amen. After this, the bread, wine, and water are distributed to those present, and the deacons carry portions to such as are necessarily detained from the meeting. Those who are able and willing contribute what they please in money, which is given to the president of the meeting, and is appropriated to the support of widows and orphans, the sick, the poor, and whomsoever is necessitous."

942.—THE LICKING OF THE OX.—*Num. xxii. 4.*

"When the ox is first turned into the pasture-land, it may be noticed eating round and round some tree or other object, the circle gradually decreasing as he proceeds, until the herbage is fully cropped, and the ground begins to look bare. Literally he *licketh* the grass of the field. His elongated tongue twists the herbage into a wisp, and thus sets it in a favourable position for his cutting teeth on the front of the lower jaw. These hold it fast on the gristly front of the upper jaw until the jerk of the head is given which separates the herbage from its roots. Balak wished, in using this expression, to intimate both the completeness and the extent of the injury which Israel would do to Moab and Midian, if they were not hindered."—*Duns.*

943.—MODES OF ADMINISTERING BAPTISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH.—*Acts viii. 38.*

The ordinary mode of baptism in primitive times, when administered to adults, was for the catechumen to descend into a font of water, either natural or artificial, and while standing therein dip the head thrice under water. "A comparison of all the evidence leads to the conclusion that the catechumens entered the font in a state of absolute nakedness, the pool being so surrounded in the ancient churches by pillars and curtains as to make the baptismal act virtually private."

There are not wanting indications both in literature and in art of another usage; viz., that of the bishop, or other administrant, pouring water out of the hand, or from some

small vessel, on the head of the baptised. In almost all the earliest representations of Baptism that have been preserved to us, this is the special act represented. In the picture of our Lord's baptism in the baptistery of St. John at Ravenna, dating, probably, from about the year 450, our Lord is standing in the Jordan, the water reaching to the waist, and the Baptist is standing near, as if upon the bank, and pouring water from a shell, or from some small vessel, upon the head of our Lord. There is a similar representation, varying, however, in some of its details, in the Church of S. Maria in Cosmedin, also at Ravenna, the mosaics of which are said to date from the year 553 A.D.

In the Armenian order of baptism even to this day the double usage of immersion and affusion is maintained. There the actual administration is described as follows, by Rev. S. C. Malan. The priest asks the child's name, and on hearing it, lets the child down into the water, saying, "This N. servant of God, who has come from the state of childhood (or from the state of the Catechumen) to Baptism, is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. . . . While saying this the priest *buries the child* (or catechumen) *three times in the water*, as a figure of Christ's three days' burial. Then taking the child out of the water, *he thrice pours a handful of water on his head*, saying, "As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. Hallelujah. As many of you as have been enlightened by the Father, the Holy Spirit is put into you. Hallelujah."

In the case of the sick the baptism was necessarily by affusion or aspersion.

944.—THE EGYPTIAN IDEA OF ONE GOD.—*Deut. vi. 4.*

Lenormant says:—"However far we go back in the documents relating to the Egyptian religion, we find there, as a foundation, the grand idea of a Divine Unity. Herodotus affirms that the Egyptians of Thebes recognised a single god, who had no beginning, and was to have no end of days. And this assertion of the father of history is confirmed by the reading of the sacred texts in hieroglyphic characters, in which it is said of this god "that he is the sole progenitor in heaven and earth, and that he himself is not begotten, . . . that he is the sole god existing in truth, begotten of himself . . . who exists from the beginning, . . . who has made all things, and was not himself created."

The following is a translation of part of an ancient hymn :—

“ The Ancient of Heaven, the Oldest of the earth,
Lord of all existences, the Support of things, the Support of all things,
The ONE in his works, *single* among the gods,
Lord of truth, Father of the gods,
Maker of men, Creator of beasts,
Lord of existences.”

“ This sublime notion, if it was retained in the esoteric (secret) doctrine, soon became obscured and disfigured by the conceptions of the priests and the ignorance of the people. The idea of God became confounded with the manifestations of his power ; his attributes and qualities were personified as a crowd of secondary agents arranged in a hierarchical order, co-operating in the general organisation of the world, and in the preservation of created beings. In this way that polytheism was formed which in the truth and peculiarity of its symbols ended by embracing the whole of nature.”

945.—SWARMS OF FLIES.—*Exod.* viii. 21.

These insects sometimes cause no slight suffering in Palestine, as I can vouch from my own experience. However large or however small they may be, they attack alike, restless and rabid foes, and make themselves insufferable in a thousand ways in every season and place, in the house and in the field, by day and by night. I have never, indeed, seen them in such quantities as Moses predicted (*Exod.* xxiii. 28 ; *Deut.* vii. 20), and as there must have been when two kings of the Amorites were driven from their country by them (*Josh.* xxiv. 12). According to the Talmud they stung their enemies in the eyes, inflicting a mortal wound. Still, frequently, in 1857 and 1860, while I was encamped near the tents of the Bedawin, in the neighbourhood of the Jordan and to the south of Hebron, flies were brought in such numbers by the east wind, that all, beasts and men, were in danger of being choked by them, as they crept into our ears, noses, and mouths, and all over our bodies. My servant and I were the first to fly from this pest, as we were spotted all over like lepers with the eruption caused by their bites ; the Bedawin themselves were not slow to follow our example. I am not the only person who has experienced this nuisance ; for Eugene Roger, who travelled in Palestine during the seventeenth century, informs us that during his stay at Nazareth a swarm of small black flies, called *bargash*, invaded the plain of Esdraelon, where a tribe of Bedawin, to the number of six hundred tents, were encamped, who suffered greatly from them. The flies, therefore, still

infest Palestine as they did of old, except that they are not now so numerous as to compel the chiefs of the villages or tribes (answering to the kings of the Pentateuch and Joshua) to evacuate the country before them. The Philistines had a special deity whom they invoked against these pests, Baalzebub, the god of flies (2 Kings i. 2, 16), whose principal temple was at Hebron. The reason of this is evident at the present day, for the ancient country of the Philistines is infested with insect plagues, as I experienced, together with his Excellency, Surraya Pasha, in the summer of 1859.—*Pierotti.*

946.—ECCLESIA, OR CHURCH.—*Acts xv. 22.*

This Greek word describes properly the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those who were possessed of the right of citizenship for the transaction of public affairs. The word precisely intimates that they were *called* or summoned, and called *out of* the whole population. Those attending the public assemblies were only a select portion of the population; not the servile masses, nor strangers, nor those who had forfeited their civil rights. The word became a very suitable and suggestive one to describe that select body, gathered out from the world, which became organised as the Church of Jesus Christ.

The word, however, did not come directly from the heathen Greek into Christian use. The translators of the Septuagint found two corresponding words in the Hebrew, which they translated, with some uncertainty, by the terms *synagogue* and *ecclesia*. From the Septuagint the word probably came into the New-Testament Scriptures.

It has been pointed out that the derivation of these two words indicates that *ecclesia* is the nobler word, and the more suitable as a designation of the Christian community. Ecclesia is properly the calling together of men: the synagogue—at least in its Latin equivalent, *congregatio*—is a gathering together of cattle (*grex*).

947.—MEASURING TIME BY THE SHADOW.—*Job vii. 2.*

The reference may be to the shades of evening which bring promise of rest from toil; but Roberts gives the following more striking illustration of the passage:—

“The people of the East measure time by the length of their shadow. Hence if you ask a man what o’clock it is, he immediate goes in the sun, stands erect, then looks where his shadow terminates; he measures the length with his feet and tells you

nearly the time. Thus they earnestly desire the shadow, which indicates the time for leaving their work. A person wishing to leave his toil often cries out, ‘How long my shadow is in coming !’ When asked, ‘Why did you not come sooner ?’ his answer is, ‘Because I waited for my shadow.’”

In some parts of England it was customary, a few years ago, before watches became common, for all labourers, whom a long familiarity had taught the direction in which the fields lay in respect to the cardinal points of the heavens, when they wished to ascertain the hour of the day, to turn their faces towards the north, and observe the bearing of their own shadow. By this simple expedient they would often guess within a few minutes of the time.

948.—CASTING UP A BANK.—*Isaiah xxxvii. 33.*

In the siege of an ancient city the first thing done was, probably, to advance the battering-ram. If, as often occurred in the plains of Assyria and Babylonia, the castle was built upon an artificial eminence, an inclined plain, reaching to the summit of the mound, was formed of earth, stones, or trees, and by its help the besiegers were able to bring their engines to the foot of the walls. This road was not unfrequently covered with bricks, forming a kind of paved way, up which the ponderous machines could be drawn without much difficulty. To this the prophet probably refers in the above passage : and such mounds or banks would not only serve the purpose of the battering-rams, but they would enable the besiegers to escalade the walls, which otherwise would be high up out of reach of the ladders.

949.—BLOODY SWEAT.—*Luke xxii. 44.*

One of the principal corporeal effects of the exciting passions is palpitation, or vehement action of the heart ; and it will now be shown that, when this action is intense, it produces bloody sweat, dilatation, and ultimately rupture of the heart. By those acquainted with the structure and functions of the animal frame such results might be readily anticipated ; but to others, authentic records of their actual occurrence will furnish the best proof of the fact. Perspiration, both sensible and insensible, takes place from the mouths of small regularly organised tubes, which perforate the skin in all parts of the body, terminating in blind extremities internally, and by innumerable orifices on the outer surface. These tubes are surrounded by a network of minute vessels, and penetrated by

the ultimate ramifications of arteries which, according to the force of the local circulation, depending chiefly on that of the heart, discharge either the watery parts of the blood in the state of vapour, its grosser ingredients in the form of a glutinous liquid, or in extreme cases the entire blood itself. The influence of the invigorating passions, more especially in exciting an increased flow of blood to the skin, is familiarly illustrated by the process of blushing, either from shame or anger; for during this state the heart beats strongly, the surface of the body becomes hot and red, and if the emotion is very powerful, breaks out into a warm and copious perspiration, the first step towards a bloody sweat. Of the latter affection several instances are related in the German Ephemerides, wherein Kannegiesser remarks, "Violent mental excitement, whether occasioned by uncontrollable anger or vehement joy, and in like manner sudden terror or intense fear, forces out a sweat, accompanied with signs either of anxiety or of hilarity." After ascribing this sweat to the unequal constriction of some vessels and dilatation of others, he further observes, "If the mind is seized with a sudden fear of death, the sweat, owing to the excessive degree of constriction, often becomes bloody." The eminent French historian De Thou mentions the case of "an Italian officer who commanded at Monte Maro, a fortress of Piedmont, during the warfare in 1552, between Henry II. of France and the Emperor Charles V. This officer, having been treacherously seized by order of the hostile general, and threatened with public execution unless he surrendered the place, was so agitated at the prospect of an ignominious death, that he sweated blood from every part of his body." The same writer relates a similar occurrence in the person of a young Florentine at Rome, unjustly put to death by order of Pope Sixtus V. in the beginning of his reign, and concludes the narrative as follows:—"When the youth was led forth to execution he excited the commiseration of many, and through excess of grief was observed to shed bloody tears, and to discharge blood instead of sweat from his whole body; a circumstance which many regard as a certain proof that nature condemned the severity of a sentence so cruelly hastened, and invoked vengeance against the magistrate himself, as therein guilty of murder." Amongst several other examples given in the Ephemerides of bloody tears and bloody sweat occasioned by extreme fear, more especially the fear of death, may be mentioned that of "a young boy who, having taken part in a

crime for which two of his elder brothers were hanged, was exposed to public view under the gallows on which they were executed, and was thereupon observed to sweat blood from his whole body." In his Commentaries on the four Gospels, Maldonato refers to "a robust and healthy man at Paris who, on hearing sentence of death passed on him, was covered with a bloody sweat." Zacchias mentions a young man who was similarly affected on being condemned to the flames. Schenck cites from a martyrology the case of "a nun who fell into the hands of soldiers; and, on seeing herself encompassed with swords and daggers, threatening instant death, was so terrified and agitated that she discharged blood from every part of her body, and died of haemorrhage in the sight of her assailants;" and Tissot reports from a respectable journal that of "a sailor who was so alarmed by a storm, that through fear he fell down and his face sweated blood, which during the whole continuance of the storm returned like ordinary sweat, as fast as it was wiped away."—*Dr. Stroud.*

950.—CEDAR CEILINGS.—*Jer. xxii. 14.*

Great attention was paid to the ceilings of ancient palaces. They were panelled, or wainscoted, with the precious cedar-wood, divided into square compartments; and these were painted with flowers, or with the figures of animals. Some were inlaid with ivory, each compartment being surrounded by elegant borders or mouldings. The beams, and perhaps the sides of the chambers, were gilded, or even plated with gold and silver. Even the roofs of the palace at Ecbatana are said to have been covered with silver tiles. The gold, silver, ivory, and precious woods in the ceilings of the palaces of Babylon, attributed to Semiramis, are frequently mentioned by ancient writers. The ivory ornaments found in some of the chambers at Nimroud may possibly have belonged to the ceiling.—*Layard.*

951.—ALTERNATE SINGING.—*1 Sam. xviii. 7.*

"This is remarkably like Samoan songs. One division of the party will sing the first line, and the other replies in the second; and thus they go on singing as they walk along the road, or paddle the canal, or do the piece of work in which they are engaged. They often also make these songs the vehicle of sarcastic taunts, and, in passing the house or village of parties with whom they are displeased, strike up a chant composed for the occasion by some rhymer among them, and

embodying something offensive and vexatious. Their bitter, venomous songs often lead to war."—*Turner*.

952.—JOSEPH'S DIVINING CUP.—*Gen. xliv. 5.*

This cup, or goblet, which is described as a well-known possession of Joseph's, is called a divining vessel. The word literally means to "whisper," or "mutter incantations," and it was applied to a kind of divination which proceeded by signs or symbols. There were two ways in which the goblet was used. In the first, they poured clean water into it, and then looked into the water for representations of future events. In the second, they filled the vessel with water, and then dropped into it pieces of gold, silver, or precious stones, and, by the appearances which these produced, prognostics were formed. But we cannot infer for certain from the reference to this cup, that Joseph had adopted this Egyptian practice, which would have been a censurable act on his part. It is likely that the steward only meant to imply thereby that it was an article which was sacred, reserved for the use of Joseph himself.

953.—DOCTRINES OF DEVILS.—*1 Tim. iv. 1.*

Though we cannot suppose that the Apostle alludes to them in this forecast of the future, our readers may be interested in some account of the Yezidis, or devil worshippers, a singular people inhabiting the countries situated between Persia and the North of Syria. Layard spent some time amongst them, and studied their customs and tenets with some care. He says : "The name of the evil principle or spirit is never mentioned ; and any allusion to it by others so vexes and irritates them, that it is said they have put to death persons who have wantonly outraged their feelings by its use. So far is their dread of offending the evil principle carried, that they carefully avoid every expression which may resemble in sound the name of Satan, or the Arabic word for 'accursed.' Thus in speaking of a river, they will not say *Shat*, because it is too nearly connected with the first syllable of *Sheitan*, the devil ; but substitute *Nahr*. Nor, for the same reason, will they utter the word *Keitan*, thread or fringe. *Naal*, a horseshoe, and *naal-band*, a farrier, are forbidden words ; because they approach to *laan*, a curse, and *maloun*, accursed."

When they speak of the Devil, they do so with reverence, as *Melek Taous*, King Peacock, or *Melek el Kout*, the mighty angel. Sheikh Nasr (the prince whose hospitality Layard was receiving) distinctly admitted that they possessed a bronze or

copper figure of a bird, which, however, he was careful in explaining was only looked upon as a symbol, and not as an idol. It always remains with the great Sheikh, and is carried by him wherever he may journey. This symbol is called the Melek Taous, and is held in great reverence.

The Yezidis believe Satan to be the chief of the Angelic host, now suffering punishment for his rebellion against the Divine Will, but still all-powerful, and to be restored hereafter to his high estate in the celestial hierarchy. He must be conciliated and referenced, they say ; for as he now has the means of doing evil to mankind, so will he hereafter have the power of rewarding them. Next to Satan, but inferior to him in might and wisdom, are seven arch-angels, who exercise a great influence over the world : they are, Gabriel, Michail, Raphail, Azrail, Dedrail, Azraphul, and Shemkeel. Christ, according to them, was also a great angel, who had taken the form of man. He did not die on the cross, but ascended to heaven.

They hold the Old Testament in great reverence, and believe in the Cosmogony of Genesis, the Deluge, and other events recorded in the Bible. They do not reject the New Testament, nor the Koran, but consider them less entitled to their veneration. Mohammed they look upon as a prophet ; as they do Abraham and the patriarchs.

They expect the second coming of Christ, as well as the reappearance of Imaum Mehdi, giving credence to the Mussulman fables concerning him.

954.—HOUSE OF MOURNING.—*Eccles.* vii. 2.

If a similar custom prevailed in Solomon's time to that now found in Egypt, the reference of this expression is efficiently traced. In the cemeteries in the neighbourhood of Cairo are many private burying grounds, each one belonging to one family ; and they, if the owners be of sufficient wealth, have erected within them a 'house of mourning.' To this the females of the family repair twice a year, and remain there for three or more days and nights.

955.—UZZIAH'S WAR INVENTIONS.—*2 Chron.* xxvi. 15.

Josephus, in his account of Uzziah's army arrangements, says : "He also divided his whole army into bands, and armed them, giving every one a sword, with brazen bucklers and breast plates, with bows and slings ; and besides these, he made for them many engines of war for besieging of cities,

such as cast stones and darts, with *grapplers*, and other instruments of that sort.

Of these things the *grapplers* seem to require explanation. They were designed to obviate the efforts of the besieged to hinder the action of the battering ram, and turn aside the force of its blow. It appears that the besieged would drop a doubled chain or rope from the battlements, catch the ram in it, pull it up out of place, and so break the force of its blow, if they did not altogether destroy its efficiency. It was, therefore, necessary for those in charge of the ram to hold it down at its proper angle; and this was done by placing hooks (grappling irons) over the engine, and then throwing all their weight upon them.

956.—THE SPIDER'S HANDS.—*Prov.* xxx. 28.

Spiders are gifted with the faculty of walking against gravity, even upon glass, and in a prone position. This is not effected by producing atmospheric pressure by the adhesion of suckers, but by a brush, formed of slender bristles, fringed on each side with exceeding fine hairs, gradually diminishing in length as they approach its extremity, where they occur in such profusion, as to form a thick brush on its interior surface. This is one of the modes by which they take hold with their hands, and thus they ascend walls, and set their snares in the palace as well as the cottage. Whoever examines the under side of the last joint or digit of the foot of this animal with a common pocket lens, will see that it is clothed with a very thick brush, the hairs of which, under a more powerful magnifier, appear somewhat hooked at the apex; in some species this brush is divided longitudinally, so as to form two.

957.—DECORATION WITH BRANCHES OF TREES. *Matt.* xxi. 8.

This morning, at three o'clock, we were roused by beat of drum to prepare for our march to Colombo (capital of Ceylon). We formed a long cavalcade of *palanquins* and gigs, preceded by an escort of spearmen.

The road was decorated the whole way as for a festival, with long strips of *palm branches* hung upon strings upon either side; and whenever we stopped we found the ground spread with white cloth, and awnings erected, beautifully decorated with flowers and fruits, and festooned with palm branches. These remnants of the ancient custom mentioned in the Bible, of

strewing the road with palm branches and garments, are curious and interesting.—*Bishop Heber.*

958.—NAHUM'S TOMB.—*Nah.* i. 1.

According to St. Jerome, El Kosh, the birth-place of this prophet, was a village in Galilee, and his tomb was shown at Bethogabra near Emmaus. But as his prophecies were written after the captivity of the ten tribes, the tradition which points to his death in an Assyrian village may have some probability. Layard visited a village called Alkosh, which contains a so-called tomb of Nahum. It is a place held in great reverence by Mohammedans and Christians, but especially by Jews, who keep the building in repair, and flock to it in great numbers at certain seasons of the year. The tomb is a simple plaster box, covered with green cloth, and standing at the upper end of a large chamber. On the walls of the room are slips of paper, upon which are written, in distorted Hebrew characters, religious exhortations, and the dates and particulars of the visits of various Jewish families. The house containing the tomb is a modern building, and there are no inscriptions, nor fragments of any antiquity about the place.

959.—JEWISH DISGUST AT SWINE.—*Isaiah* lxvi. 17.

Swine are always spoken of in the Old and New Testaments with horror and disgust; partly on account of their dirty habits, the supposed unwholesomeness of their flesh, their occasional carnivorous ferocity, and, above all, their association with many forms of paganism. “The unclean habits of the swine struck the Hebrews so strongly that they gave rise to the saying, ‘The snout of the pig resembles ambulant dirt.’ A man wallowing in the last and most disgusting stage of drunkenness was compared with the swine.”

It is interesting to notice that this feeling was not peculiar to the Jews. “The Egyptians regarded the pig as hateful to sun and moon. They deemed it so singularly contaminating by its uncleanness, unholiness, and all-devouring voracity, unsparing even of its own young, and of men, that any person who had accidentally touched a pig was obliged instantly to plunge into the water, dressed as he was. Swineherds, detested and disgraced, though of pure Egyptian blood, were forbidden to enter any of the national temples, or to intermarry with any other class or caste; and the Egyptian priests, and all those initiated in the mysteries, rigidly abstained from pork except on one solitary occasion.

"The same food was scrupulously shunned by the Ethiopians, who hardly ever kept swine; by the Libyans; by the Comani in Pontus, who deemed it a pollution of their temples to admit a pig within the precincts of their towns; by the Scythians, who never sacrificed swine, nor suffered them to be reared in their country at all; and the Galatians in Pessinus, who shrank from touching any part of the swine."

"The same antipathy was shared by the Phoenicians and the Syrians in Hieropolis, who regarded it as an abomination to eat or sacrifice swine. From the temple of Hercules or Melkarth, in Gades (Cadiz), women and swine were rigidly excluded. Pork was pronounced detestable by Mohammed; it was and is still abhorred by the Druses, by the Christian Copts—following, probably, the example of their Egyptian ancestors—though they eat the wild boar; by the Arabs, and Turks, and most of the South American tribes."—*From Kalisch.*

960.—A TRINITY IN SUN-WORSHIP.—*2 Cor. xiii. 14.*

Accepting the sun as the supreme divinity, it is curious to note that the Egyptians subdivided it into other divinities. Considered in its different positions and its diverse aspects the sun became in each phase a different god, having its peculiar name, attributes, and worship. Thus the sun during its nocturnal existence was *Tum*: when it shone in the meridian it was *Ra*; when it produced and nourished life, it was *Kheper*. Those were the three principal forms of the solar divinity, and they are singularly suggestive of our distinction between the invisible God, the manifested Son, and the indwelling Spirit.

Since, according to the Egyptians, the night precedes the day, *Tum* was considered to have been born before *Ra*, and to have issued alone from the abyss of chaos. Theology reunited the three manifestations of the solar power in a divine *trinity*.

961.—DANGERS OF PRANCING HORSES.—*Judges v. 22.*

Another peculiarity of the plain of the Kishon is that on certain tracts of its surface there is strong adhesive mud, and this alone enables the banks of the Kishon to maintain their remarkable upright form, even when they are twenty feet high. Now when horses and mules pass over such places, they are often unable to pull out their feet. The struggles of the mules when they felt this were violent, and the loads of those that stuck fast had to be removed. One of our donkeys, fall-

ing into this clay, which is far stiffer than the loam, succumbed without an effort, lying upon his side as if hopeless, deep sunk in the mire, and patiently waiting half an hour until the other animals had been recovered, and he could be released.

I noticed also that the form of the mule's hoof, being sharp and pointed, allows it to sink much deeper than the flat hoof of a horse ; but then the mule can, for the same reason, draw his foot out more easily. If a horse's foot is buried in the mud long enough to allow the clay to close over it from above, he finds it extremely difficult to draw his leg out again, and he instantly changes his gait to a series of plunges, with rapid, short, and jerky steps, snorting and groaning with terror, and panting and steaming in the wildest excitement. Therefore in this battle of Megiddo the war-steeds of Sisera were “dis-comfited,” flying before Israel, “so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot,” and Deborah could sing in her hymn of triumph, “Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones.”—*The Rob Roy on the Jordan.*

962.—QUENCH MY COAL.—*2 Sam. xiv. 7.*

A curious illustration of the figure used by the woman of Tekoa is found in the fact that children in Ceylon are not called coals, but sparks. It is said of a man who has a large family, “He has plenty of *porrekal*” (sparks). Those who are favoured with fine children are said to have “large sparks.” Of those whose children are all dead, “Alas ! their sparks are quenched.” To a person who is injuring an only child it is said, “Ah, leave him alone, he is the only spark.”

963.—WILD ASSES.—*Job xxiv. 5.*

Xenophon gives an interesting account of these animals, and of the districts of Assyria in which he observed them. “The country was a plain throughout, as even as the sea, and full of wormwood ; if any other kinds of shrubs or reeds grew there, they had all an aromatic smell ; but no trees appeared. Of wild creatures, the most numerous were wild asses, and not a few ostriches, besides bustards and roe-deer (gazelles), which our horsemen sometimes chased. The asses, when they were pursued, having gained ground of the horses, stood still (for they exceeded them much in speed) ; and when these came up with them, they did the same thing again, so that our horsemen could take them by no other means but by dividing them-

selves into relays, and succeeding one another in the chase. The flesh of those that were taken was like that of red deer, but more tender."

964.—WHIRLWINDS.—*Isaiah* xli. 16.

This seems to be the name applied to a "wind which moves about in circles," having a quick rotatory motion. Roberts says : "I have frequently seen the effects of these winds in the East : they whirl round with great violence, and carry high up into the air dust, straw, branches of trees, and other substances, each circle becoming smaller till it reaches the apex. The sight of this wind, when it commences its operations, has a most exciting effect ; and the people attach very superstitious notions to its origin and results. Its name in Tamul is *soola kartu*, or the circular wind." Burnes writes of the desert district westward of the Moorghab river, "In this neighbourhood, and more particularly while on the banks of the river, we witnessed a constant succession of *whirlwinds*, that raised the dust to a great height, and moved over the plain like water-spouts at sea. In India these phenomena are familiarly known by the name of 'devils' where they sometimes unroof a house." And Layard reports of the summer season at Nimroud : "Violent whirlwinds occasionally swept over the face of the country. They could be seen as they advanced from the desert, carrying along with them clouds of sand and dust. Almost utter darkness prevailed during their passage, which lasted generally about an hour, and nothing could resist their fury. On returning home one afternoon after a tempest of this kind, I found no trace of my dwellings ; they had been completely carried away. Ponderous wooden frameworks had been borne over the bank, and hurled some hundred yards distant ; the tents had disappeared, and my furniture was scattered over the plain. When on the mound, my only secure place of refuge was beneath the fallen lion, where I could defy the fury of the whirlwind : the Arabs ceased from their work, and crouched in the trenches, almost suffocated and blinded by the dense cloud of fine dust and sand, which nothing could exclude."

965.—EGYPTIAN IDEAS OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.
2 Cor. v. 10.

The Egyptians taught that the bodies of all men descended into the infernal regions, the Ker-neter, or Amenti, the place of the gods ; but all were not sure of resurrection. "To obtain

it they must have committed no grave fault either in deed or thought. The deceased was to be judged by Osiris and his forty-two deputies ; his heart was placed on one side of the scales held by Horus and Anubis ; the god Thoth registered the result of the weighings. Upon this judgment, given in the ‘Hall of Double Justice,’ the irrevocable fate of the soul depended. If the deceased was convicted of unpardonable faults, he became the prey of an infernal monster with the head of a hippopotamus, and he was beheaded by Horus and by Smu, one of the forms of *Set*, upon the *nemma*, or infernal scaffold. Final annihilation was received by the Egyptians as being the punishment of the most wicked. The just, purified from his venial sins by a fire, which was guarded by four genii with monkey’s faces, entered into the *pleroma*, or state of beatitude, and, having become the companion of Osiris, the chief of all good creatures (Unnefer, the Good Being ; a very common funereal title of the deity Osiris), he was nourished by him on delicate food.”—*Lenormant*.

966.—THE RAIN AND THE DESERT POOLS.—*Psalm lxxxiv. 6.*

Bonar’s narrative efficiently explains the allusion of the Psalmist.

At one o’clock we turn to the right, and enter *Wady Shellál*, with its black cliffs. The approach of another caravan of ten camels from Mount Sinai tells us that this is the highway of the desert. The rocks are getting harder, and basalt appears in several places. Hitherto we had passed through arid hills and plains of sandstone, which do not retain water ; but as we advanced southwards the primitive rocks begin to show themselves ; and as these retain the showers longer than the others they are better able to nourish at least some shreds of vegetation here and there. Here are some seyâleh trees along the road and in the lower crevices, on which at present we see nothing but thorns ;—leaf, blossom, and seed are not yet. Here comes our ever-smiling sheikh with some rich prize which he has made his own, and which he means to share with us. It is a jug of cold water, which he has just got from a ravine by the way. It is rather muddy, but the best desert water we have as yet tasted. It was *mut’r* he informed us, that is, rain-water, which had been detained in some hollow of the rocks. He wished us also to understand that it was *tayib*, that is, *good*. We had seen some half a dozen of our men spring away to the left at full speed and dash into a rock-cleft, and we concluded that their eye had caught sight of some *gazellah* “leaping upon

the mountains, skipping upon the hills" (Song ii. 8). We now saw the object of their pursuit ; there was water there. It was not "living water ;" it was only a pool filled with the rain ; but that was no common boon in such a valley of Baca as this.

967.—ANCIENT OF DAYS.—*Dan.* vii. 9.

This title appears to have a Babylonian origin. The "Ancient of Days" is one of the titles of the god *Anu*, who during the earliest period of the religion of the Euphrates, represented the idea of a cosmic (earthly) and uranic (heavenly) god, one who was at once heaven, earth, and time. He is probably the same as *Uлом*, or *Eschmun* of Phoenicia, *Marna* of Gaza, *Baal-haldim* of the other parts of Palestine, and, lastly, the Arabian god *Audh* or *Hobal*. "Of all the divine personifications admitted into the Euphratico-Syrian religions he was the most comprehensive, and the most nearly allied to the notion of primordial unity, but at the same time also the most vaguely defined ; he was a little like the Vedic Varuna, and the Ouranos (heaven) of the more ancient Greeks. From the time of the oldest Chaldaean dynasties, as also at the beginning of that stage which saw the complete classification of religion, he was made the first principle in connection with other gods, and the author of all emanations." He was called pre-eminently "the Ancient," "the Progenitor," and "the Father of the Gods."

968.—STINGS OF BEES AND WASPS.—*Isaiah* vii. 18.

The following incidents prove how terrible a plague swarms of bees or wasps might become.

In 1858 two gentlemen belonging to an Indian Railway Company, viz., Messrs. Armstrong and Boddington, were surveying a place called Bunder Coode, for the purpose of throwing a bridge across the Nerbudda, the channel of which, being in this place from ten to fifty yards wide, is fathomless, having white marble rocks rising perpendicularly on either side from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high, and beetling fearfully in some parts. Suspended in the recesses of these marble rocks are numerous wild bees' nests, the inmates of which are ready to descend upon any unlucky wight who may venture to disturb their repose. As the boats of these European surveyors were passing up the river, a cloud of these insects overwhelmed them ; the boatmen, as well as the two gentlemen, jumped overboard ; but Mr. Boddington, who swam,

and had succeeded in clinging to a marble block, was again attacked, and being unable any longer to resist the assaults of the countless hordes of his infuriated winged foes, he threw himself into the depths of the water, never to rise again. Mr. Armstrong and the boatmen, although very severely stung, were saved.

Lieut. Holman, the blind traveller, narrates the following :— “The muleteers suddenly called out, ‘Marambundas ! marambundas !’ which indicated the approach of a host of wasps. In a moment all the animals, whether loaded or otherwise, laid down on their backs, kicking most violently ; while the blacks, and all persons not already attacked, ran away in different directions, all being careful, by a wide sweep, to avoid the swarms of tormentors that came forward like a cloud. I never witnessed a panic so sudden and complete, and really believe that the bursting of a waterspout could hardly have produced more commotion. However, it must be confessed that the alarm was not without a good reason ; for so severe is the torture inflicted by these pigmy assailants that the bravest travellers are not ashamed to fly the instant they perceive the terrific host approaching, which is of no uncommon occurrence on the Campos.”

969.—ASSYRIAN HORSE SOLDIERS.—*Nahum iii. 3.*

Layard says :— Horsemen are seen in the most ancient sculptures of Nimroud. (It is curious that horsemen are nowhere represented on the monuments of Egypt.) Disciplined bodies of cavalry were represented in the bas-reliefs of Kouyunjik. We learn from the Book of Judith that Holofernes had 12,000 archers on horseback. Solomon also had 12,000 horsemen (1 Kings x. 26). The king himself is never represented on horseback, although a horse, richly caparisoned, apparently for his use—perhaps to enable him to fly, should his chariot-horses be killed—is frequently seen led by a warrior, and following his chariot.

In the earliest sculptures the horses, except such as are led behind the king’s chariot, are unprovided with clothes or saddles. The rider is seated on the naked back of the animal. At a later period, however, a kind of pad appears to have been introduced ; and in a sculpture at Kouyunjik was represented a high saddle not unlike that now in use in the East.

The horsemen were armed with swords and bows, or with swords and long spears (see the passage at heading of this note). They wore short tunics, and their legs and feet were

bare. When riding without pads or saddles they sat with their knees almost on a level with the horse's back. After the introduction of saddles their limbs appear to have been more free, and they wore greaves or boots, but were unprovided with stirrups.

When an archer on horseback was in battle his horse was held and guided by a second horseman, who rode by his side. He was then able to discharge his arrows freely. On the monuments of Khorsabad and Kouyunjik the cavalry are usually armed with the spear. When using this weapon they did not require a second horseman to hold the reins.

The riding horses are less richly and profusely adorned than those in harness, the horsemen being probably of inferior rank to those who fought in chariots. The head-stall was surmounted by an arched crest, and round the neck was an embroidered collar, ending in a rich tassel or bell. (See Zech. xiv. 20.)

970.—“AMONG THE THORNS.”—*2 Chron.* xxxiii. 11.

It appears that the Hebrew word translated “thorns,” though it has sometimes that meaning, is also used for a “hook” or “ring,” such as it was usual to put through the jaws of a fish, and to attach by a string to the shore, in order that the fish might so be kept alive captive in the water. The Assyrian kings of the Sargonid dynasty were in the habit of thus treating their more important prisoners. A bas-relief in the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad represents that monarch in the act of receiving from one of his great officers three prisoners who have been the victims of this practice. Two of them stand before the great king with hands upraised, beseeching his mercy; the other has thrown himself on his knees at the king's feet in abject entreaty, while the stern victor threatens them with a spear. All these captives have rings passed through their under lips, to which strings or thongs are attached, and Sargon is represented with one end of the thongs in his left hand. There can be little doubt that what the writer of Chronicles intended to state was that the captains of the king of Assyria, when they had taken Manasseh prisoner, placed “hooks” or “rings”—perhaps two for greater security—in his mouth, and thus led him before their master.—*Bib. Ed.*

971.—WATERING FLOCKS AT WELLS.—*Gen.* xxiv. 19, 20.

One cannot travel in Mongolia, amongst a pastoral and nomad population, without one's mind involuntarily going back

to the time of the first patriarch, whose pastoral life had so close a relation with the manners and customs which we still find among the Mongol tribes.

We had scarcely pitched our tent, and arranged our modest kitchen, when we saw several Tartar horsemen advancing at full gallop. They were coming to draw water and give it to the numerous flocks that had been long awaiting them. These animals, which had hitherto stood at a distance, seeing the shepherds approach, hastened to the spot, and soon all were grouped round the well, eager to quench their thirst. This large assemblage of animals, so numerous and so various, created an agitation, a tumult to which we were quite unused amid the silent solitude of the desert; and it was perhaps on account of its novelty that this confusion was, to us, full of entertainment. It was amusing to see the half-tamed horses pushing and struggling to arrive first at the well; then, instead of drinking in peace, biting, quarrelling, and even leaving the water in order to pursue each other on the plain. The scene was especially entertaining and picturesque when an enormous camel came forward, spreading alarm round the well, and driving away the vulgar herd by its despotic presence.

There were four Mongol shepherds; while two of them, armed with a long rod, ran about trying to effect a little order among the flocks, the two others drew the water in a manner which greatly excited our surprise. First, the utensil they used by way of pail appeared to us very remarkable; it was the entire skin of a goat solidly fastened at the four feet, the only opening being at the neck. A hoop kept this orifice open; a long, strong rope of camel's hair was fastened at one end to the wooden handle that crossed the diameter of the orifice, and at the other end to the saddle of the horse ridden by one of the Tartars, who, when the skin was filled, rode off, and thus hauled up the bucket to the hedge of the well, where it was received by another man, who emptied its contents into the troughs.

The well was of astonishing depth; the rope used to raise the bucket seemed more than 200 feet long. Instead of running in a pulley, it went right over a large stone in which a large groove was already made by the constant friction. Although the drawing up of the water was performed with great activity, it was nearly dark before all the flock had been watered; we then brought our five animals to participate in the general banquet, and the Tartars had the complaisance to

draw water also for us ; otherwise, it is probable we should never have got it, but have been obliged to suffer thirst beside an abundant well !—*Huc.*

972.—WRITING IN THE EARTH.—*Jer. xvii. 13.*

A visitor to India notes the following illustrative observation :—"I beheld children writing their lessons with their fingers on the ground, the pavement being for that purpose strewed all over with very fine sand. When the pavement was full, they put the writing out, and, if need were, strewed new sand from a little heap they had before them, wherewith to write farther."

973.—THE DESOLATION OF BASHAN AND CARMEL.

Isaiah xxxiii. 9.

These districts present a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. The declaration of the above passage is precisely matched by the following notes from the observations of Eastern travellers.

"The oppressions of the Government, on the one side, and those of the Bedouins on the other, have reduced the fellah of the Hauran (Bashan) to a state little better than that of the wandering Arab. Few individuals, either among the Druses or Christians, die in the same village in which they were born. Families are continually moving from one place to another ; in the first year of their new settlement the sheikh acts with moderation towards them ; but his vexations becoming in a few years insupportable, they fly to some other place ; but they soon find that the same system prevails over the whole country. This continued wandering is one of the principal reasons why no village in the Hauran has either *orchards*, or *fruit trees*, or gardens for the growth of vegetables."

"Of the vineyards, for which Bozrah was celebrated, and which are commemorated by Greek medals, not a vestige remains. There is scarcely a tree in the neighbourhood of the town ; and the twelve or fifteen families who now (1812) inhabit it cultivate nothing but wheat, barley, horse-beans, and a little dhourra. A number of fine rose trees grow wild among the ruins of the town, and were just beginning to open their buds."

The very name Carmel denotes a fruitful field, and the district was renowned for its excellency. But now "the top and sides of Carmel are covered with shrubs and flowers, but quite bare of trees ; a few olives flourish at its foot, and on the

lowest slopes, as if trying to get up and invalidate the prophecy. The “excellency” of Carmel “is indeed departed.” “The view from the summit of Carmel is very grand, but somewhat saddening, from the loneliness and want of cultivation that everywhere meet the eye : wide tracts of land, unchequered by a village ; at the base of the mountain a few bald corn fields, and some olive and sycamore trees compose the view.”

974.—THE OIL AND THE CUP.—*Psalm xxiii. 5.*

Captain James Wilson illustrates the singular association of this passage by an incident in his own history. “I once had this ceremony performed on myself in the house of a great and rich Indian, in the presence of a large company. The gentleman of the house poured upon my hands and arms a delightful and odoriferous perfume, put a golden cup into my hands, and poured wine into it *till it ran over*; assuring me, at the same time, that it was a great pleasure to him to receive me, and that I should find a rich supply in his house.”

Pouring until the cup runs over is an Eastern mode of proferring full and abundant hospitality.

975.—COMMUTATION OF CRIMES.—*Exod. xxi. 24.*

The real bearing of this supposed law of retaliation has been already considered. It is a curious illustration of the decayed sentiment prevailing in the time of our Lord, that the Pharisees had invented a scale of money payments in lieu of the sufferings enjoined by the law. As in our own middle ages, a tariff of fines was constructed for each personal injury ; for tearing the hair, for a cuff on the ear, a blow on the back, spitting on the person, taking away an under-garment, uncovering the head, and the like. The value of a hand, or foot, or an eye, was computed by the depreciation it would have made in the value of a slave. A blow on the ear was variously set at the fine of a shilling or a pound ; a blow on the one cheek at two hundred zuzees ; on both cheeks, at double. To tear out hair, to spit on the person, to take away one’s coat, or to uncover a woman’s head, was compensated by a fine of four hundred zuzees.

976.—THE PROPHET OF THE WILDERNESS.—*Matt. iii. 1.*

Whatever doubts may exist as to the exact spot of John’s baptism in the Jordan valley, the images, and even associations,

of the whole valley are so similar, that what applies to one spot must more or less apply to all. “The wilderness” of the desert plains, whether on the western or eastern side, is the most marked in the whole country, and never has been inhabited, except for the purposes of ascetic seclusion, as by the Essenes and the hermits of later times. Wide as was the moral and spiritual difference between the two great prophets of the Jordan wilderness, and the wild ascetics of later times, yet it is for this very reason important to bear in mind the outward likeness which sets off this inward contrast. Travellers know well the startling appearance of the savage figures who, whether as Bedouins or Dervishes, still haunt the solitary places of the East with a “cloak”—the usual striped Bedouin blanket—“woven of camel’s hair, thrown over the shoulders, and tied in front on the breast; naked, except at the waist, round which is a girdle of skin; the hair flowing loose about the head.” This was precisely the description of Elijah, whose last appearance had been on this very wilderness, before he finally vanished from the eyes of his disciple. This, too, was the aspect of his great representative, when he came in the same place, dwelling, like the sons of the prophets, in a leafy covert woven of the branches of the Jordan desert, preaching in “raiment of camel’s hair,” with a leathern girdle round his loins, eating the locusts of the desert, the wild honey which dropped from the tamarisks of the desert region, or which distilled from the palm groves of Jericho.—*Stanley.*

977.—THE PREACHING OF STEPHEN.—*Acts vi. 9, 10.*

It is apparent that there must have been some peculiarity about the preaching of Stephen, for it roused a hostility which had not been caused by the preaching of St. Peter, and the hostility came from another quarter. The persecutors of the Apostle had been Sadducees, who hated him for the witness which he bore to the resurrection of Jesus. He had been protected by the temporising policy of the more moderate section of the Pharisees represented by Gamaliel. In the case of Stephen we have a coalition between the more violent section of those Pharisees headed by Gamaliel’s pupil and the Sadducean priesthood. And the charges against him, interpreted by the tenor of his own *Apologia*, show why this was so. He had dwelt, more than the Twelve had done, on the wider thoughts which in the teaching of our Lord had been presented as in their germinal state, and had been developed by the

teaching of the Spirit. That the Temple was to pass away, that its sacrifices had ceased to have any value for the deliverance of man's soul from the power or penalty of evil, that the customs which Moses had delivered, the whole body of outward ceremonial ordinances, were about to pass away before the coming of a better order, this Stephen saw more clearly and proclaimed more earnestly than Peter had as yet done. And therefore it was that while the storm of persecution fell on him and the whole body of believers, specially, it is obvious, on his six colleagues and those who followed his teaching, the Twelve were able to remain at Jerusalem and carried on their work without further molestation. They were not again exposed to the fiery trial of persecution till they had taken one or two decisive steps in the path in which Stephen had led the way.—*Plumptre.*

978.—THE HAND AND THE DRAG NETS.—*John* xxi. 3.

The hand net is in shape like the top of a tent, with a long cord fastened to the apex. This is tied to the arm, and the net is so folded that when it is thrown it expands to its utmost circumference, around which are strung beads of lead to make it drop suddenly to the bottom. Now see the actor; half-bent, and more than half-naked, he keenly watches the playful surf, and there he spies his game tumbling in closely toward him. Forward he leaps to meet it. Away goes the net, expanding as it flies, and its leaded circumference strikes the bottom ere the silly fish is aware that its meshes have closed around him. By the aid of his cord the fisherman leisurely draws up the net and the fish with it. This requires a keen eye, an active frame, and great skill in throwing the net. He must be patient, watchful, wide awake, and prompt to seize the exact moment to throw.

The drag net is larger and requires the united labour of several fishermen. Some must row the boat, some cast out the net, some on the shore pull the rope with all their strength, others throw stones and beat the water round the ends to frighten the fish from escaping there; and as it approaches the shore every one is active in holding up the edges, drawing it to land and seizing the fish. This is that net which “gathered of every kind;” and when drawn to the shore the fishermen sit down, “and gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”

979.—THE POOL OF SILOAM.—*John ix. 11.*

The Pool of Siloam is a deep reservoir, situated at the mouth of the Tyropœan Valley, into which the water flows from a basin a few feet above it. The superfluous water runs off along the base of Ophel, through a narrow rocky channel, to the terraced gardens of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where it is expended by being led into a multitude of artificial channels for the purpose of irrigation; else its natural course would lead it into the bed of the Kedron. About 1,100 feet above the pool is a fountain, called the Fountain of the Virgin, which tradition has long represented as the source of Siloam. Professor Robinson and Mr. Smith had the satisfaction of proving the correctness of this belief; for they actually groped their way through the subterranean passage which connects these reservoirs, entering at one and emerging at the other, a distance of 1,750 feet, owing to the tortuous direction of the course. In some parts they could only proceed by crawling on their hands and knees, or by lying at full length dragging themselves along on the elbows. One cannot sufficiently admire the courage which enabled them to perform such a feat. The passage has been artificially hewn through the solid rock; and it was probably made in order to convey the water into the city at a time when one of the extremities was included within the wall.

The water in the fountain has an unaccountable irregularity in the flow, sometimes rising a foot or more in five minutes, and then soon returning to its former level. The water is sweetish, and has a peculiar taste, which, however, does not impair its agreeableness or wholesomeness.—*Gosse.*

980.—KIR-HARASETH AND ITS STONES.—*2 Kings iii. 25.*

When we were encamped at Dhibán, I asked the Arabs whereabouts the Moabite stone was discovered. The answer was, “Between the two *háriths*.” Now *háirth* means a ploughman, and I replied, “I suppose you mean ‘the two ploughed fields?’” “No,” said my informant, “I mean those two hills;” and it appears that every eminence in the country surmounted by ruined sites is called a *háirth*.” I noted this at the time as a curious local idiom, and took no further notice of it; but when I came across the name of the ancient capital of Moab, Kir-Haraseth, and referred to the rabbinical authorities upon it, I found this word *haraseth* had considerably puzzled the commentators. Now *hareth*, or *haraseth*, in Hebrew

is precisely identical with the word “harith” which I had heard, and Kerek, the present representative of the ancient capital of Moab, stands upon the most decided eminence of this kind ; and we can well understand how the ancient city might have been spoken of as *par excellence* “the city of the hill,” *Kir-haraseth*. Thus we find in the present local idiom of the country the explanation of a difficulty which neither Jewish nor Christian commentators on the Bible were able to explain before.—*Palmer*.

981.—A LEGEND OF THE DEATH OF MOSES.—*Jude* 9.

In the Midrash on Deuteronomy is found this strange and wild legend, and to some one of such legends Jude may possibly refer in the passage above.

“ Moses prayed that if he might not enter into the Promised Land, he might at least be allowed to live ; but God told him that unless he died in this world he could have no life in the world to come, and commanded Gabriel to fetch his soul. Gabriel shrank from the task. Michael was next bidden to go, and he too shrank ; and then the command was given to Sammael, who found him with his face shining as the light, and he was afraid and trembled. He told him why he was come, and Moses asked him who had sent him, and he made answer that he was sent by the Creator of the Universe. But Moses still held out, and Sammael returned with his task unfulfilled. And Moses prayed, ‘Lord of the World, give not my soul over to the Angel of Death.’ And there came a voice from Heaven, ‘Fear not, Moses, I will provide for thy burial.’ And Moses stood up, and sanctified himself as do the seraphim, and the Most High came down from heaven, and the three chief angels with Him. Michael prepared the bier and Gabriel spread out the winding sheet. . . . And the Most High kissed him, and through that kiss took his soul to Himself.”

“ And God’s own Hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in his grave.”

982.—MEN’S DRESS IN THE EAST.—*Matt.* v. 40.

“ The dress of the Eastern nations, some peculiar cities among which we observed with particular attention, is adapted to their climate and manners. As they are accustomed to sit cross-legged, they wear their clothes very wide. And being obliged to express their respect for holy places, and for the apartments of the great, by leaving their shoes at the gate,

they find it necessary to dress so as that they may suffer no inconvenience from the want of them. In many countries of the East the climate is very unequal, with sudden variations from heat to cold. The inhabitants of such countries are obliged to clothe themselves warmer than we should think necessary, and to wear several pieces of dress, one over another, which they may lay aside and resume as the temperature of the air varies. The Turks, who set the fashion to a great part of the East, wear a shirt with very wide sleeves, and, under it, linen drawers joining stockings of the same stuff, over which they put upon their feet *teiliks*, which are a sort of very thin slippers. Above these stockings, drawers, and shirt, they put on a *schakschir*, or large red breeches, to which are sewed other slippers, or *mests*, as thin as the first. Above the *schakschir* they wear an *enteri*, or vest, which falls under the knees; and over the whole a caftan or robe, reaching down to the feet. That it may not incommod them in walking, they take up a part of the caftan by means of a broad girdle, in which is fixed the *canjar*, or poignard, which the Turks constantly wear. Over the caftan they put on a great-coat with very short sleeves, which, for winter, is lined with furs, but is without them when intended to be worn in the other seasons of the year. They often cover all these pieces of dress with another pelisse or *benisch*, or surtout of thick cloth. Such a quantity of clothes would be too expensive for the common people, and inconvenient for them to wear at their work. They are content with the breeches, the *enteri*, and the *benisch*. The peasant wears only the shirt and drawers. A dress consisting of so many different pieces is not convenient for travelling. Upon a journey, therefore, the Turks carry a large blue bag, in which they put up their long clothes. They wrap their feet in pieces of cloth, and put on wide boots; and although this mode of dressing the legs and feet be not the most convenient for walking, yet it is warmer than our stockings. . . . All the inhabitants of the East, except some Mohammedan clergy, or the orders of Dervises and Snatons, shave their heads, reserving only a small tuft of their hair. This custom has been blamed by some persons in Europe, as rendering apoplexies more frequent among us than they were among our forefathers; but it appears not to produce any such effects among the Turks, for they are not subject to apoplexy. They perhaps guard against it by covering their heads better than we. Their shaved heads seem to require a warmer covering at least, and indeed they wrap it up to a degree that seems

to us very unsuitable to the warmth of the climate. Neither do they uncover it in expression of respect ; our mode of salutation seems to them very absurd and ridiculous. Through the East there prevails a great variety of modes in covering the head, which, at first, seems inconsistent with the constancy in such matters for which these people are distinguished. This diversity, however, depends not on fashion. Differences in the head-dress serve as distinctive marks of the nation, the condition, and the employment of the persons who wear them. They even serve as livery to servants ; each class wear a particular form of bonnet, corresponding to the nature of their business. It is very convenient to find among persons with whom one is unacquainted, such external marks indicating their respective conditions. These various head-dresses, which the Europeans confound under the general name of Turban, may be all reduced to three sorts. The *first* is a very high cloth bonnet lined with cotton, and wrapped round upon the under part with a piece of white muslin. This head-dress, which is called the *Kaouk*, is nothing but the Turcoman bonnet with some ornaments, and is therefore to be considered as a Turkish piece of dress. The *second* is a cloth bonnet, smaller, and much lower than the former ; it is also wrapped upon the under part with a piece of linen, and then receives the name of *sasch* or *turban* ; this is the national head-dress of the Arabians, and by them the fashion has been communicated through the rest of Asia. The *third* is also a bonnet of cloth, lined with cotton, of various heights in the crown ; but instead of being wrapped with linen, bordered with a piece of lambskin. It is called *Kalpak*, and is of Tartar origin, although now worn by many of the Christians in the East. All the great men in Turkey wear the *Kaouk* of yellow cloth, with a piece of fine white muslin wrapped round it. The *Scheriffs*, or descendants of Mohammed, although in little estimation, and scarcely ever admitted to any public employments, distinguish themselves by a piece of green linen rolled round their turbans, or *Kaouks*. The Copts, and such Christians as use not the *Kalpak*, wear a piece of linen, striped blue and white, round their *Kaouk*, which is commonly made of red cloth. They are imitated in this fashion by such Europeans as assume the dress of the country. Even the clergy wear it, as well as others, except the cordeliers and capuchins. These last wear, through the whole East, the dirty tattered dress of their orders, which is very disgusting to the Mohammedans, who consider neatness and cleanliness as parts of religious duty."—*Niebuhr*.

983.—DOCTORS AND MEDICINE.—*Mark v. 26.*

It is singular to find so little reference in the Scriptures to medical men, and the healing art. There could have been little knowledge of disease, or scientific treatment of it ; and magical arts, and superstitious rites took the place of surgery or medicine. Yet it is singular to find, in the incantations of the Chaldees, reference to almost every precise form of disease with which we are familiar. Medicine in Tartary is almost exclusively practised by the Lamas, or Buddhist priests, and their ways probably represent fairly well the practices common throughout the East.

“When illness attacks any one, his friends run to the nearest monastery for a Lama, whose first proceeding, upon visiting the patient, is to run his fingers over the pulse of both wrists simultaneously, as the fingers of a musician run over the strings of an instrument. The Chinese physicians feel both pulses also, but in succession. After due deliberation, the Lama pronounces his opinion as to the particular nature of the malady. According to the religious belief of the Tartars, all illness is owing to the visitation of the *Tchutgour*, or demon ; but the expulsion of the demon is first a matter of medicine. The Lama physician next proceeds, as Lama apothecary, to give the specific befitting the case ; the Tartar pharmacopœia rejecting all mineral chemistry, the Lama remedies consist entirely of vegetables pulverised, and either infused in water, or made up into pills. If the Lama doctor happens not to have any medicine with him, he is not disconcerted ; he writes the names of the remedies upon little scraps of paper, moistens the paper with his saliva, and rolls them up into pills, which the patient tosses down with the same perfect confidence as though they were genuine medicaments. To swallow the name of a remedy, or the remedy itself, say the Tartars, comes to precisely the same thing.”

984.—WORKERS MUST BE ALSO SOLDIERS.—*Neh. iv. 17.*

In countries or districts liable to the visits of, or partly occupied by, Bedouins or Tartars, or where a settled population is divided into adverse clans or tribes, or where the principle of blood revenge is in strong and extensive operation,—under all these and other circumstances the cultivators dare not pursue the labours of the field unarmed. Men may be seen following the plough with guns slung to their backs and swords by their sides ; or else these and other weapons were

placed within reach, while they pursued such labours as kept them stationary. Sometimes also, but less frequently, they may be observed, armed with guns, swords, spears, clubs, and bucklers, keeping a watchful guard while their fellows pursued their important labours. It is by such facts as these that we are most forcibly impressed with a sense of the misery and fear of a state of society in which even common safety is regarded as the greatest of temporal blessings.

985.—PRECEPT ON PRECEPT.—*Isaiah xxviii. 7—13.*

Mr. S. Cox brings out skilfully the precise, and the first, meaning of this somewhat difficult passage.

“In their private intercourse with each other when, as Isaiah tells us, they ‘were swallowed up of wine,’ and went altogether ‘out of the way through strong drink,’ inasmuch that their tables were ‘full of filthy vomit ;’ in their shameless carousals the false priests and the prophets who backed them with ‘lying visions’ made themselves great sport in jeering at Isaiah, in ridiculing the one prophet who cared more for the welfare of the people than for their applause, and loved the service of God more than the pleasures of the senses. They mocked at his incorrigible simplicity. They mimicked and burlesqued his manner of speech. ‘Whom would he teach knowledge,’ they cried ; ‘and to whom would he make a message intelligible ? To weanlings from the milk, just withdrawn from the breast ?’ To them he seemed an intolerable moralist, for ever schooling them as if they were babes and needed the mere milk of instruction, not strong men capable of digesting meat. ‘With him,’ they said, ‘it is always precept on precept, precept on precept, line on line, line on line, here a little, and there a little.’ Or, as we may perhaps better translate their words they said, ‘with him it is always ‘bid and bid, bid and bid, for-bid and for-bid, for-bid and for-bid, a lit-tle bit here, a lit-tle bit there.’

“The words, indeed, may be translated in many ways ; for, in the original, they are more like the babble of drunken men than sober and intelligent speech. At the same time, although the words manifestly imply the condition of those who uttered them, they were evidently designed as a burlesque imitation of the great simplicity of speech which Isaiah used. Monosyllable is heaped on monosyllable ; and no doubt, the speaker tipsily adopted the tones of fond mothers addressing their babes and weanlings. Using the Hebrew words of the verse, one of these shameless roysterers would say : ‘*Tsav la-tsav,*

tsav la-tsav ; Kav la-kav, Kav la-kav ; Zeeir sham, zeeir sham ; that is how that simpleton Isaiah speaks.' And then, doubtless, a drunken laugh would go round the table, and half a dozen of them would be saying their *Tsav la-tsav, tsav la-tsav,* at once.

"What really angered these burly scorners was that the prophet treated them as though they were children only just weaned, and not as masters in Israel. They were weary of hearing him repeat the first rudiments of morality, and apply them to the sins and needs of the time."

986.—SLIME FOR DAUBING MOSES' ARK.—*Exodus ii. 3.*

The traveller Jowett says:—Our boat was ballasted with earth taken from the banks of the river, very rich and stiff soil, without stones; with this same mud the sides of the boat were plastered at those parts in the fore half of the vessel where moveable planks were placed in order to raise the gunner higher; the mud filled up the crevices, and prevented the water from gushing in, as would otherwise be the case. This mud was so rich and slimy, and when dry so firm and impervious, that, together with the strong reeds that grow on the bank, it is easy to conceive how the mother of *Moses* constructed a little ark, which would float; she then placed it among the flags, in order that the stream might not carry it down.

987.—A STORY LIKE THAT OF DAVID AND GOLIATH.

1 Sam. xvii. 49.

The following anecdote was told by a Tartar horseman to the Abbé Huc. "In the great match of 1843, a wrestler of the kingdom of Efe had overthrown all competitors, Tartars and Chinese. His body, of gigantic proportions, was fixed upon legs which seemed immovable columns; his hands, like great grappling irons, seized his antagonists, raised them, and then hurled them to the ground, almost without effort. No person had been at all able to stand before his prodigious strength, and they were about to assign him the prize, when a Chinese stepped into the ring. He was short, small, meagre, and appeared calculated for no other purpose than to augment the number of the Efeian's victims. He advanced, however, with an air of firm confidence; the Goliath of Efe stretched out his brawny arms to grasp him, when the Chinese, who had his mouth full of water, suddenly discharged the liquid into the giant's face. The Tartar mechanically raised his hands

to wipe his eyes, and at the instant, the cunning Chinese rushed in, caught him round the waist, threw him off his balance, and down he went, amid the convulsive laughter of the spectators."

988.—THE GEOLOGY OF PALESTINE.—*Deut.* xi. 11.

The country, from Jerusalem and Hebron on the south, to Esdraelon on the north, presents such constantly recurring features, that a description of that in the Samaritan district will give a correct impression of the whole. Indeed, were it not for the distant views reaching beyond Jordan on the one hand, and to the sea on the other, including long ranges, broad plains, and distant blue ridges, the scenery would present a most monotonous and uninteresting recurrence of round-topped barren hills and deep stony valleys. Palestine is, as has been remarked, the country of all others where distant effects can best be studied and appreciated.

The geological composition of the hills is a dark grey, sometimes almost purple, limestone, hard and compact, stratified in beds of an average thickness of two, three, to seven feet, and as a rule very nearly horizontal. These are referred by the French geologists to the early miocene or late cretaceous period, and called by them nummulitic.

Beneath this bed lies another, similar to that on the east of Jerusalem, a soft chalky soil containing a portion of alumina ; in fact, approaching to a marl. The beds are much thicker, ranging from ten to fifteen feet, and in places beds of equal thickness of a flint conglomerate of dark colour are found interstratified. The dip of this formation varies, but apparently the beds are not conformable with the upper limestone. A good view of the outcrop of a still lower bed is obtained at the head of Wady Farah, an important valley running to the Jordan on the east of Nablous. The chalk here is suddenly replaced by a secondary limestone, the beds contorted with a dip which probably in places exceeds 45°, and stratified in thinner beds of dark colour. The strike can be traced for many miles in a southern direction along the plain east of Nablous ; and a deep water-worn ravine on N.E. of the town has left on its west side a strip of the limestone, which fringes the softer and rounder outline of the chalk hill.

This third formation is a dolomitic or crystalline limestone, marked by narrow torrent beds, with natural caverns. The outline is sharper than that of the nummulitic limestone, which

appears, however, to be the main feature in the landscape on the south.

The appearance of the country is what would be naturally expected from such formations. Round stony hills, hemmed in and divided by innumerable valleys, mostly narrow and nearly all dry; down these the winter torrents which first formed them flow to the plains, but in summer the water supply is limited to a few streams and to wells. The horizontal beds give a tame outline to the hills, and their only beauty consists in their colour towards evening or in early morning, when reds, bright browns, and yellows, with bluish or purplish shadows in the deep folds of the hills, give, with the distant dim mountains on the east, a striking though barren scene. Where soil exists not consisting of grey shingle from the rock, it is of a rich reddish colour, and it affords, as Captain Burton remarks, a valuable indication in searching for ruins, as the existence of this virgin soil is a distinct negative proof.

989.—THE LEGEND OF ST. PETER'S DEATH.—*2 Peter i. 14.*

It is assumed in the Roman tradition that St. Paul and St. Peter worked together harmoniously at Rome for some time, and that both suffered martyrdom when Nero persecuted the Christians as the assumed authors of the great fire in the Imperial city.

“The disciples urged Peter to flee, and he left the city by the Appian Way. A little distance beyond the Porta Capena (now the Porta S. Sebastiano), the modern Church known as ‘Domine quo vadis?’ records the vision that turned him back. He saw his Master’s form, and he asked, ‘Lord, whither goest Thou?’ and from his lips there came the words, ‘I go to Rome to be crucified yet again.’ The Apostle felt the rebuke, turned his steps back, and was soon afterwards taken and thrown into the Tullianum, or Mamertine prison. There, in what is now the crypt-like chapel of *S. Pietro in Carcere*, he converted his jailers, and a spring of fresh water burst out of the ground that he might baptise them. The day of execution came, and the two apostles were led out of the city on the Ostian Way. A small oratory marks the place where they bade each other their last farewell. St. Paul was led on to the spot now known as the *Tre Fontane* and beheaded. St. Peter, whose wife had suffered martyrdom before him, and had been strengthened by his exhortations, was taken to the height of the Janiculum, or Transtiberine region, and on the spot now marked by a small circular chapel in the churchyard of St.

Pietro in Montorio, suffered the punishment which the Romans inflicted on slaves, and outlaws, and barbarians, and was nailed to the cross. He desired, in the intensity of his humility, something that would make his death more ignominious and shameful than his Master's, and at his own request he was crucified head downwards. When all was over, the body was interred in the Catacombs outside the city on the Appian way, probably in those known as the Catacombs of S. Callistus. After they had remained there for a year and a half, they were removed, probably by Jewish converts who inhabited the Transtiberine region to which the ground belonged, to the Ager Vaticanus.

990.—HINDOO IDEAS ABOUT DEVIL-POSSESSION.—*Matt. iv. 24.*

The universal opinion in the East is, that devils have the power to enter into men and take possession of them, in the same manner as we understand them to have done in the cases described by the sacred writers. I have often seen the poor objects who were believed to be under demoniacal influence ; and, certainly, in some instances, I found it no easy matter to account for their conduct on natural principles. I have seen them writhe and tear themselves in the most frantic manner. They burst asunder the cords with which they were bound, and fall on the ground as if dead. For some time they remain silent, and again become most vociferous ; they dash with fury amongst the people, and loudly pronounce their imprecations. But no sooner does the exorcist come forward, than the victim becomes the subject of new emotions ; he stares, talks incoherently, sighs, and falls on the ground ; and in the course of an hour, is as calm as any of those by whom he is surrounded. Those men who profess to eject devils are frightful-looking creatures, with whom no one ventures to associate, except in the discharge of their official duties. It is a fact, that they affect to eject the evil spirits by their “ prince of devils.”—*Roberts.*

991.—PAUL'S CLOAK.—*2 Tim. iv. 13.*

It is interesting to find the Apostle concerned for this old, and probably favourite garment. It was one of those large, thick, and sleeveless wrap-alls, with an opening through which the head was thrust, then worn by men who were about to expose themselves in journeying to the severities of the weather. When he wrote the winter time was approaching, he had the

prospect of confinement for weeks and months in the dismal Mamertine dungeon, and felt what a comfort his warm thick cloak would be to him. Very possibly he had made it himself out of the rough cloth he was accustomed to manufacture for tents. Certainly it had been the companion of many a rough voyage, and many a cold journey, and even, if friends in Rome had been willing to lend him a warm covering, we can well understand his preference for his own old cloak.

992.—THE PROPHECY CONCERNING SHILOH.—*Gen. xl ix. 10.*

A satisfactory exposition of this passage can hardly be said to exist. Gesenius adopts a different rendering to that we have in the Authorised Version. He reads : ‘The sceptre shall not depart, etc., until *rest* comes, and the nations obey him.’ The Septuagint Version gives it thus : “A ruler shall not decline from Judah, nor a leader from between his thighs until the *things reserved for him come to pass*, and he is the expectation of the nations.”

It is frequently found, in relation to prophecy, that nothing will fully explain the prediction until the event foretold becomes an accomplished fact. The rule holds in the present instance, and the facts of the subsequent history materially help in the understanding of the passage.

The first camp of the Israelites in Canaan was stationed at Gilgal, from whence the head-quarters were subsequently removed to Shiloh, about ten miles south of Shechem, and twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem. Here the tabernacle was pitched, and here was the centre of the national worship until the time of Samuel. But when the tabernacle was first set up in Shiloh the wilderness journey was all over, most of the Canaanitish nations were destroyed, and the land was in full possession of Israel. Judah had all along been the foremost tribe in fighting the battles through which the people had passed ; and this important *rule*, or *leadership*, continued until the tribes came to Shiloh, and then there was no more need for it. Instead of ‘until Shiloh come,’ we may read “until they come to Shiloh.” The last clause of the text is sufficiently explained by the fact that “to it (Shiloh) the people gathered,” for national and religious purposes.

993.—THE WORD KIND.—*Eph. iv. 32.*

This word is part of the word “mankind,” and properly, a “kind” person is a *kin-ned* person, one of kin, one who

recognises, and acts worthily of his *kinship* with others ; one who willingly acknowledges that he owes to others, as being of the same blood with himself, a debt of love. Mankind is properly *man-kinned*, knit together as of one *kin*.

994.—THE SLAUGHTER AT BETH-HORON.—*Josh.* x. 10—14.

Much of the difficulty felt in dealing with the so-called miracle of the Sun and Moon standing still is removed by a careful observation of the incidents and circumstances of the day. Mr. S. Cox gives the following description, which brings out into strong relief the important points of the narrative.

“The five kings of the Amorites, and their combined host, taken at unawares, were unable to stand the onset of Joshua’s ‘mighty men of valour.’ They broke, and fled up the western pass, ‘the way that *goeth up* to Beth-horon.’ Up the weary length of this steep, difficult pass the flying host had to toil, chased by their eager foes, and suffering a great slaughter, till they reached the hamlet of Upper Beth-horon, at the crown of the pass.

“When the pursuing army of Israel reached this point, the summit of the pass, a broad and noble scene would open before them, extending even to the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. But, doubtless, they would cast but a rapid glance on the *distant* scene. That which would most attract their eyes would be the rough steep road, heavy with loose stones and shale, broken at intervals with sharp upturned edges, and again by smooth, slippery sheets of rock, which led down to Lower Beth-horon, and over which their discomfited enemies were flying in wild disorder amid the horrors of a tropical storm. For it was as the Amorites turned the crest of the pass, ‘in the *going down* to Beth-horon,’ that they met a fierce tempest driving up from the sea ; thunder, lightning, and a deluge of hail storming down on their broken ranks, the Lord casting down great stones upon them, so that ‘they were more that died of the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.’

“It must have been a weird and marvellous spectacle which burst on the panting warriors of Israel as they topped the pass. Behind them lay the hills which hid Gibeon from view, while from high above those hills the sun shone hotly on their backs. Beneath them the steep mountain-path sloped sharply into the valley, all thick with their scattered and disheartened foes ; while, before them, black clouds of tempest rolled up from the sea, and the faint crescent moon glimmered through a rift in

the clouds over the distant valley of Ajalon. To Joshua and his captains the scene would be as unwelcome as it was strange. For here were their foes utterly at their mercy, and, if the daylight would but last, sure to be well-nigh exterminated by a terrible slaughter. But here, too, was the tempest driving up the valley from the sea, threatening to blot out the light of the sun, and, by bringing the day to a premature close, to give their foes an opportunity of escape.

"At such a conjuncture as this, the natural thought of Joshua, his wish, perhaps his prayer, would be, 'O that the daylight would last, that the darkening tempest might be dispersed, and that we might *see* our foes till the victory be complete!' If this was his wish, his prayer, it would be answered as the storm blew by, and the sun shone out through the clouds. In some way it *was* answered; for the Israelites did chase the Amorites down the pass, and through the valley, smiting them with a very great slaughter."

995.—EASTERN HURRICANES.—*Job xxx. 15.*

We have given already illustrations of the severity of wind-storms in Eastern countries, but the following vivid description by the Abbé Huc may add materially to our knowledge and impressions.

"At two days' distance from the barrier of San-Yen-Tsin we were assailed by a hurricane which exposed us to very serious danger. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. We had just crossed a hill, and were entering upon a plain of vast extent, when, all of a sudden, a profound calm pervaded the atmosphere. There was not the slightest motion in the air, and yet the cold was intense. Insensibly, the sky assumed a dead white colour, but there was not a cloud to be seen. Soon, the wind began to blow from the west; in a very short time it became so violent that our animals could scarcely proceed. All nature seemed to be in a state of dissolution. The sky, still cloudless, was covered with a red tint. The fury of the wind increased; it raised in the air enormous clouds of dust, sand, and decayed vegetable matter, which it then dashed right and left, here, there, and everywhere. At length the wind blew so tremendously, and the atmosphere became so utterly disorganised, that, at mid-day, we could not distinguish the very animals upon which we were riding. We dismounted, for it was impossible to advance a single step, and after enveloping our faces in handkerchiefs, in order that we might not be blinded by the dust, we sat down beside our animals. We

had no notion where we were ; our only idea was that the frame of the world was unloosening, and that the end of all things was close at hand. This lasted for more than an hour. When the wind had somewhat mitigated, and we could see around us, we found that we were all separated from one another, and at considerable distances ; for amid that frightful tempest, bawl as loud as we might, we could not hear each other's voices."

996.—PISGAH.—*Deut. xxxiv. 1.*

The identification of this interesting spot is yet a matter of dispute. Dr. J. A. Paine makes a suggestion, based upon a careful examination of the locality, which deserves careful and patient consideration :—

"In the descents from the plateau of Moab to the Jordan plain an east and west range is cut out by deep water-courses on either side. At the verge of the plateau, thus, the highest point in the range occurs. It is called *Shefā Nebā*, or the crest of *Nebā*, and has an altitude of about 2,725 feet. From this point the ridge falls considerably into a depression, and then rises slightly into a round summit, called *Jebel Nebā*, or Mount Nebo. It stands about three-quarters of a mile west of *Shefā Nebā*, and is from forty to fifty feet lower, being between 2,685 to 2,675 feet in altitude. From this point the ridge falls rapidly away, till it recovers its extension and runs out westward, rising somewhat, as it goes into obscure elevations, to the distance of a mile and a quarter to a mile and a half, where it suddenly ends in a promontory of two heights, or a projecting eminence of double summit, the two points standing a quarter of a mile apart and relatively to each other, the one on the north-east the other on the south-west ; the north-east one being the ruin-covered summit and the south-west one being the final extremity. Both bear the name *Sīughah*, and are about 2,360 feet in altitude above the Mediterranean. It will be seen that *Jebel Nebā*, Mount Nebo, is forty feet lower than *Shefā Nebā*, the crest of the plateau on the east ; so that it is entirely useless to come upward to *Jebel Nebā*, Mount Nebo, in order to fulfil the text, 'Get thee up into *rōsh hap-Pisgah* and lift up thine eyes eastward ;' for there is less to be seen eastward on *Jebel Nebā* than from the lower *Sīughah*. Also, it will thus be seen that the double summit *Sīughah* is about 325 feet lower than *Jebel Nebā*, Mount Nebo ; but it still has no less than 3,660 feet of elevation above the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan plain, which, with its remark-

able projection into the Jordan Valley, gives it an extraordinary attribute of prospect. By reason of its peculiar fitness to be the Pisgah of the Bible, and believing *Siāghah* to be a relic of the name, I once identified one of these two points, the final elevation, with Mount Pisgah."

997.—A GRACEFUL STORY ABOUT ST. JOHN.—*Rev. i. 9.*

The following is narrated by John Cassian, a hermit of the fifth century, and it is also told by St. Anthony and others.

"In his old age the Apostle used to find pleasure in the attachment of a bird which he had tamed—a partridge. One day, as he held it in his bosom, and was gently stroking it, a huntsman suddenly approached, and, wondering that one so illustrious should take to such a trivial amusement, he asked, 'Art thou that John whose singular renown had inspired even me with a great desire to know thee? How, then, canst thou occupy thyself with an employment so humble?' The Apostle replied, 'What is that in thy hand?' He answered, 'A bow.' 'And why dost thou not always carry it bent?' 'Because,' he answered, 'it would in that case lose its strength; and when it was necessary to shoot, it would fail from the too continuous strain.' 'Then let not this slight and brief relaxation of mine, O young man, perplex thee,' answered the Apostle; 'since without it the spirit would flag from the unremitting strain, and fail when the call of duty came.'"

998.—CUSTOMS OF THANKSGIVING AT MEALS. *Deut. viii. 10.*

Athenæus says that in the famous regulation made by Amphyctyon, King of Athens, with respect to the use of wine, he required that the name of Jupiter, the Sustainer, should be decently and reverently pronounced. The same author quotes Hermeias, an author extant in his time, who mentions a people in Egypt, inhabitants of the city of Naukrates, whose custom it was on certain occasions, after they had placed themselves in the usual posture of eating at table, to rise again and kneel; the priest then chanted a grace, according to a stated form among them, after which they joined in the meal. Clement of Alexandria also informs us that when the ancient Greeks met together to refresh themselves with the juice of the grape, they sang a piece of music which they called a scholion. Livy, too, speaks of it as a settled custom among the old Romans to offer sacrifice and prayer to the gods at

their meals. Trigantius, a Jesuit, in his narrative of the expedition of the Jesuit missionaries in China, says of the Chinese that “before they place themselves for partaking of an entertainment, the person who makes it sets a vessel, either of gold, or silver, or marble, or some such valuable material, in a charger full of wine, which he holds with both his hands, and then makes a low bow to the person of chief quality or character at the table. Then from the hall or dining-room he goes into the porch or entry, where he again makes a very low bow, and turning his face to the south, pours out this wine upon the ground as a thankful oblation to the Lord of heaven. After thus repeating his reverential observance he returns into the hall.”

999.—EDOM BECOME A WILDERNESS.—*Joel* iii. 19.

One of the older Eastern travellers, Olin, verifies the fulfilment of this prophecy.

“The ascent of Mount Hor, for a considerable distance up the side of the mountain, is not very steep; and we saw many ruined terraces, the evidences and remains of a flourishing agriculture, which, in the prosperous days of Edom and Petra, clothed many of these now sterile mountains with fertility and beauty. . . . The splendid ruins and monuments of Petra, however, are alone sufficient to demonstrate the wealth and civilisation of the kingdom of which it was the metropolis. Fields of wheat, and some agricultural villages, still exist in the eastern portion of Edom; but, with very slight exceptions, the country is blighted with cheerless desolation and hopeless sterility. The hill-sides and mountains, once covered with earth and clothed with vineyards, are now bare rocks. The soil, no longer supported by terraces and sheltered by trees, has been swept away by the rains. The various contrivances for irrigation, which even now might restore fertility to many considerable tracts, have all disappeared. Sand from the desert, and the *débris* of the soft rock of which the mountains are composed, cover the valleys that formerly smiled with plenty. The rays of a burning sun have imparted to the whole region a dark and gloomy hue, which harmonises well with the melancholy detail of its desolations.”

1000.—STREETS NAMED AFTER TRADES.—*Jer.* xxxvii. 21.

“The streets in Eastern cities are generally distinguished from each other, not by the separate names which they bear,

but by the sort of traffic or business carried on in them. The different branches of trade, instead of being intermixed, as with us, are usually assigned to a distinct locality. Thus, at Cairo, the principal streets have a row of shops on each side of them ; each of these streets, or a part of each, is devoted to a particular branch of commerce, and is known as ‘the market’ of the articles sold or manufactured there. Hence we hear of the market of the butchers, of the fruiterers, the copper-ware sellers, the jewellers, and so on. The same thing is true of other places, as Damascus, Beirut, Constantinople, Smyrna. One of the most interesting sights that I saw at Damascus was the great bazaar of the Armenian jewellers, where the clank of the hammers and the blast of the furnaces reminded me of a factory in our own land. All those who follow this business have their workstands under the same roof. Here, too, we have a usage of the past perpetuated to the present time. Jerusalem was parcelled out, in like manner, among its artisans and tradesmen. We read that Jeremiah, during his imprisonment by order of Zedekiah, received ‘daily a portion of bread out of the bakers’ street’ (*Jer. xxxvii. 21*). That a close connection existed between those of the same craft we learn incidentally from *Neh. iii. 32*. In rebuilding the holy city after the exile, ‘the goldsmiths and the merchants’ acted together in repairing a portion of the walls. Josephus calls the valley between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah the Tyropeon, that is, the valley of the cheesemongers. He mentions also a street of the meat-dealers.”—*Hackett.*

1001.—TENTS.—*Gen. iv. 20.*

Tent-life differs so materially from life in settled dwellings, and is so difficult for us to realise, that the following careful description of the Mongolian tent, given by M. Huc, may be of interest.

The mongol tent, for about three feet from the ground, is cylindrical in form. It then becomes conical, like a pointed hat. The wood-work of the tent is composed below of a trellis-work of crossed bars, which fold up and expand at pleasure. Above these, a circle of poles, fixed in the trellis work, meets at the top, like the sticks of an umbrella. Over the woodwork is stretched, once or twice, a thick covering of coarse linen, and thus the tent is composed. The door, which is always a folding-door, is low and narrow. A beam crosses it at the bottom by way of threshold, so that on entering you have at once to raise your feet and lower your head. Besides

the door there is another opening at the top of the tent to let out the smoke. This opening can at any time be closed with a piece of felt fastened above it in the tent, which can be pulled over it by means of a string, the end of which hangs by the door.

The interior is divided into two compartments ; that on the left, as you enter, is reserved for the men, and thither the visitors proceed. Any man who should enter on the right side would be considered excessively rude. The right compartment is occupied by the women, and there you find the culinary utensils ; large earthen vessels of glazed earth, wherein to keep the store of water ; trunks of trees, of different sizes, hollowed into the shape of pails, and destined to contain the preparations of milk, in the various forms which they make it undergo. In the centre of the tent is a large trivet, planted in the earth, and always ready to receive the large iron bell-shaped cauldron that stands by ready for use.

Behind the hearth, and facing the door, is a kind of sofa, the most singular piece of furniture that we met with among the Tartars. At the two ends are two pillows, having at their extremity plates of copper, gilt, and skilfully engraved. There is probably not a single tent where you do not find this little couch, which seems to be an essential article of furniture ; but, strange to say, during our long journey we never saw one of them which seemed to have been recently made. We had occasion to visit Mongol families, where everything bore the mark of easy circumstances, even of affluence, but everywhere alike this singular couch was shabby, and of ancient fabric. But yet it seems made to last for ever, and is regularly transmitted from generation to generation.

In the towns where Tartar commerce is carried on, you may hunt through every furniture shop, every broker's, every pawnbroker's, but you meet with not one of these pieces of furniture, new or old.

At the side of the couch, towards the men's quarter, there is ordinarily a small square press, which contains the various odds and ends that serve to set off the costume of this simple people. This chest serves likewise as an altar for a small image of Buddha. The divinity, in wood or copper, is usually in a sitting posture, the legs crossed, and enveloped up to the neck in a scarf of old yellow silk. Nine copper vases, of the size and form of our liqueur glasses, are symmetrically arranged before Buddha. It is in these small chalices that the Tartars daily make to their idol offerings of water, milk, butter, and meal.

A number of goats' horns fixed in the wood-work of the tent complete the furniture of the Mongol habitation.

1002.—GROUPING THE APOSTLES.—*Matt. x. 2—4.*

It is curious to note that in all the Apostolic lists the “Twelve” are divided into the same three groups. (1.) Peter, James, John, and Andrew, are always named together—the two sons of Jona, and the two sons of Zebedee. Peter invariably heads the first group, and the others follow in different orders in the different Gospels. (2.) The second group consists of Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas; Philip being the first, and the others following in different orders. (3.) The third group is composed of James, the son of Alphæus—always first; Jude, his brother; Simon Zelotes, another brother; and Judas Iscariot—in every sense the last.

The first group includes the natural leaders of the company, the men of passion and enthusiasm. In the second group we find the reflective, or sceptical men—the doubters and questioners. The third group may be called the Hebraistic or practical group. Hebraistic in virtue of one set of qualities which they have in common, and practical in virtue of another set of qualities.—*Expositor.*

1003.—PHARAOH'S TREASURE CITIES.—*Exodus i. 11.*

Miss Whateley gives the following note on the places.

On the canal from Bubastis to Lake Timsah were “built the ‘treasure cities’ of Pithom and Rameses, alluded to in the first chapter of Exodus. It is supposed that these ‘treasure cities’ were strongly fortified places, in which were caravanserais for the trade with Asia, and large depots of the warlike materials kept in store by the king for his campaigns. This is more probable than the supposition of his storing up gold or jewels in cities placed on the very frontier of his kingdom.

“Herodotus and others mention Pithom; Rameses is only mentioned in Exodus; but its site has been ascertained by the discovery of a granite statue of Rameses, between two figures of Egyptian gods, with the king’s name inscribed repeatedly on different parts of it. As it seems probable that these treasure cities and the canal were parts of one plan, the Israelites may very probably have been compelled to labour in the construction of this first attempt to form a water-path through the desert. The main object of this work seems to have been to strengthen that side of Egypt which was exposed

to the danger of invasion from the hated Hyksos, or shepherd-kings."

1004.—ORNAMENTED SEPULCHRES.—*Matt.* xxiii. 27.

In the plains of Sahrai-Sirwan, Rawlinson noticed many white-washed obelisks, placed on any elevations which occurred conveniently, some rising to the height of fifteen feet, a modern example of "whitened sepulchres." The custom of "garnishing the sepulchres" prevails more or less throughout Persia. One singular adornment is "hair," many pillars being decked with a coronal of women's tresses ; since on the death of an important person his female relatives cut off their hair, and weaving this into wreaths, hang them upon the tomb. One peculiarity is also notable in their monuments—the character and former occupations of the deceased are not stated in words, but given in a series of pictorial designs.

1005.—DESOLATE HIGHWAYS.—*Lev.* xxvi. 22.

Volney testifies to the literal fulfilment of this threatening. "In the interior part of the country there are neither great roads, nor canals, nor even bridges over the greatest part of the rivers and torrents, however necessary they may be in winter. Between town and town there are neither posts nor public conveyances. Nobody travels alone, from the insecurity of the roads. One must wait for several travellers who are going to the same place, or take advantage of the passage of some great man, who assumes the office of protector, but is more frequently the oppressor of the caravan. The roads in the mountains are extremely bad ; and the inhabitants are so far from levelling them, that they endeavour to make them more rugged, in order, as they say, to cure the Turks of their desire to introduce their cavalry. It is remarkable that there is not a waggon or a cart in all Syria."

Dr. Bowring, in the Parliamentary Report, says, "Generally speaking, the roads in Syria are in a deplorable condition ; in the rainy season, indeed, travelling is almost impossible. I understand that roads are scarcely, if ever, repaired. Wheeled carriages, of course, cannot be employed."

1006.—EGYPTIAN HATE OF SHEPHERDS.—*Gen.* xlvi. 34.

"We are inclined to consider that the aversion of the Egyptians was not so exclusively against rearers of cattle as such, as against the class of pastors who associated the rearing

of cattle with habits and pursuits which rendered them equally hated and feared by a settled and refined people like the Egyptians. We would therefore understand the text in the most intense sense, and say that '*every nomade shepherd*' was an abomination to the Egyptians ; for there is no evidence that this disgrace attached, for instance, to those cultivators who, being proprietors of lands, made the rearing of cattle an important part of their business. The nomade tribes, who pastured their flocks on the borders or within the limits of Egypt, did not in general belong to the Egyptian nation, but were of Arabian or Libyan descent ; whence the prejudice against them as nomades was superadded to that against foreigners in general. The turbulent and aggressive disposition which usually forms part of the character of nomades—and their entire independence, or at least the imperfect and uncertain control which it is possible to exercise over their tribes—are circumstances so replete with annoyance and danger to a carefully organised society, like that of the Egyptians, as sufficiently to account for the hatred and scorn which the ruling priestly caste strove to keep up against them ; and it was probably in order to discourage all intercourse that the regulation precluding Egyptians from eating with them was first established.

"In the reign of Timaus, or Thamuz (about the year 2159 B.C., according to Dr. Hales in his *New Analysis of Chronology*), Egypt was invaded by a tribe of Cushite shepherds from Arabia. The Egyptians submitted without trying the event of a battle, and were exposed, for a period of 260 years, to the most tyrannous and insulting conduct from their new masters ; who made one of their own number king, and established their capital at Memphis ; having in proper places strong garrisons, which kept both Upper and Lower Egypt under subjection and tribute. There were six kings of this dynasty, who were called *Hycsos*, or 'king-shepherds' ; and they exercised a degree of cruelty and oppression upon the natives which left an indelible sense of hatred upon the minds of the Egyptians, even in periods long subsequent. At last the national spirit was roused, and after a war of thirty years, the princes of Upper Egypt succeeded in obliging them to withdraw from the country which had been so deeply injured by their invasion. They withdrew, as it seems, to Palestine, where they appear in Scripture history as the Philistines. This event, according to Dr. Hales, was about twenty-seven years before the commencement of Joseph's administration ; and as the memory of the

tyranny which they had suffered must still have been fresh in the minds of the Egyptians, this seems sufficiently to account for the fact that ‘every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians,’ without resorting to the supposed dislike of the Egyptians to pastoral people on account of their pursuits and mode of life.”—*Kitto*.

1007.—BUDDHIST MORAL PRECEPTS.—*Prov.* xxx. 15—31.

“Buddha, the Supreme of Beings, manifesting his doctrine, pronounced these words:—‘There are, in living creatures, ten species of acts which are called good, and there are also ten species of acts which are called evil.’ If you ask, what are the ten evil acts? There are three which appertain to the body—murder, theft, and impurity. The four appertaining to speech are—words sowing discord, insulting maledictions, impudent lies, and hypocritical expressions. The three appertaining to the will are—envy, anger, and malignant thoughts.

“The man who seeks riches is like a child that, with the sharp point of a knife, attempts to eat honey. Ere he has time to relish the sweetness that has but touched his lips, nothing remains to him but the poignant pain of a cut in the tongue.

“There is no passion more violent than voluptuousness! Nothing exceeds voluptuousness. Happily there is but one passion of this kind; were there two, not a man in the whole universe could follow the truth.

“Beneath heaven there are twenty difficult things. (1) Being poor and indigent, to grant benefits is difficult. So is (2) being rich and exalted, to study doctrine. (3) Having offered up the sacrifice of one’s life, to die veritably. (4) To obtain a sight of the prayers of Buddha. (5) To have the happiness to be born in the world of Buddha. (6) To compound with voluptuousness, and to be delivered from one’s passions. (7) To behold an agreeable object, and not to desire it. (8) To resist a tendency for the lucrative and exalting. (9) To be insulted, and abstain from anger. (10) In the whirlwind of business to be calm. (11) To study much and profoundly. (12) Not to scorn a man who has not studied. (13) To extirpate pride from the heart. (14) To find a virtuous and able master. (15) To penetrate the secrets of nature and the profundities of science. (16) Not to be excited by prosperity. (17) To leave wealth for wisdom. (18) To induce men to follow the dictates of conscience. (19) To keep one’s heart always in equal motion. (20) Not to speak ill of others.”

1008.—THE ART OF PLAITING THE HAIR.—*I Peter* iii. 3.

Among the Jews there were women who made it a gainful profession to plait women's hair. The art must, indeed, have required some practice and skill, since it seems that the taste of the Jewish women inclined them to have their hair set up, by the aid of crisping pins, in the form of horns and towers. It was also practised anciently in every part of the East, and is, to the present day, in India, in China, also in Barbary. It was also prevalent among the Greeks and Romans, as ancient gems, busts and statues, still remaining sufficiently declare. In monuments of antiquity, the heads of the married and single women may be known, the former by the hair being parted from the forehead, over the middle of the top of the head ; the latter, by being quite close, or being plaited and curled all in a general mass.

1009.—MODE OF WATERING THE FIELDS.—*Jer. xxxi. 12.*

Layard says :—“The mode of raising water, generally adopted in the country traversed by the rivers of Mesopotamia, is very simple. In the first place a high bank, which is never completely deserted by the river, must be chosen. A broad recess, down to the water's edge, is then cut in it. Above, on the edge of this recess, are fixed three or four upright poles, according to the number of oxen to be employed, united at the top by rollers running on a swivel, and supporting a large framework of boughs and grass, which extends to some distance behind, and is intended as a shelter from the sun during the hot days of summer. Over each roller are passed two ropes, the one being fastened to the mouth, and the other to the opposite end, of a sack, formed out of an entire bullock-skin. These ropes are attached to oxen, which throw all their weight upon them by descending an incline plane, cut into the ground behind the apparatus. A trough formed of wood, and lined with bitumen, or a shallow trench, coated with matting, is constructed at the bottom of the poles, and leads to the canal running into the fields. When the sack is drawn up to the roller, the ox turns round at the bottom of the inclined plane. The rope attached to the lower part of the bucket being fastened to the back part of the animal, he raises the bottom of the sack, in turning, to the level of the roller, and the contents are poured into the troughs. As the ox ascends, the bucket is lowered ; and when filled, by being immersed into the stream, is again raised and emptied, as I have described. Although

this mode of irrigation is very toilsome, and requires the constant labour of several men and animals, it is generally adopted on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. In this way all the gardens of Baghdad and Busrah are watered ; and by such means the Arabs, who condescend to cultivate—when, from the failure of the crops, famine is staring them in the face—raise a little millet to supply their immediate wants."

1010.—THE PLACE OF THE FATHERS' SEPULCHRES. *Neh.* ii. 3.

Norman Macleod records the impression made on him by one portion of the view from the Mount of Olives.

"There is one feature of the view from this spot which I was not prepared for, and which greatly impressed me. It is the Jewish burying-ground. For centuries, I know not how many, Jews of every country have come to die in Jerusalem that they might be buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Their wish to lie here is connected with certain superstitious views regarding the Last Judgment (which they believe is to take place on this spot), and certain privileges which are to be then bestowed on all who are here interred. And thus thousands, possibly millions, of the most bigoted and superstitious Israelites, from every part of the world, have in the evening of life flocked to this the old 'city of their solemnities,' that after death they might be gathered to their fathers beneath the shadow of its walls.

"I never saw a graveyard to me so impressive. Scutari is far more extensive, and more terribly deathlike. But from its huddled monuments and crowded trees, it is impossible to penetrate its dark and complicated recesses. Here, there are no monuments and no trees. Each grave is covered by a flat stone with Hebrew inscriptions, and has nothing between it and the open sky. These stones pave the whole eastern slope of the valley. Every inch of ground where a human body can lie is covered. Along the banks of the Kedron, up the side of Olivet, and across the road leading from Bethany to Jerusalem, stretches this vast city of the dead."

1011.—WHY THE HARE WAS UNCLEAN FOOD.—*Lev.* xi. 6.

There is no reasonable doubt that it is the animal we call the hare which is prohibited in this passage, but the ground on which the prohibition is based is singular, and, indeed, scientifically incorrect. Neither the coney nor the hare, in

any proper sense, “chews the cud.” They cannot possibly do so, as they have not the four stomachs that are the peculiarity of the ruminant animals.

But the hare has a singular habit (observed also in some of the other rodents) of moving its jaws when it is at rest as if it was masticating. Dr. Tristram says: “It is quite sufficient to watch the creature working and moving its jaws, as it sits in a chink of the rocks, to understand how any one writing as an ordinary observer, and not as a comparative anatomist, would naturally thus speak of it.” And J. D. Michaelis writes: “Although there may have been no genuine rumination in the strict sense of the term, yet the act of the hare munching its food went popularly by the name of rumination, or chewing again.” Linnæus indeed classed the hare with ruminating animals, speaking from the popular opinion with regard to it. And the poet Cowper—who kept hares and observed them diligently—says that “one of his hares chewed the cud all day till evening.”

The Moslems have the express permission of their Prophet to eat the flesh of the hare. The Greeks and the Romans also ate it, and so do the modern Arabs. The Parsees abstain from it; and Caesar says that its flesh was not eaten by the ancient Britons.

1012.—BETHSHEMESH.—*1 Sam. vi. 12.*

When the Philistines sent back the Ark of the Covenant to the land of Israel, they put it on a cart, and took two milch kine, shutting up their calves, and leaving the cows to take their own way with the cart. Contrary to their natural instincts, they left their calves, and took the straight way to Bethshemesh, going along lowing, and neither turning to the right hand nor to the left.

It may be asked if there was any particular reason why this town of Bethshemesh should have been chosen? Turning to Joshua xxi., which contains a list of the cities which fell by lot to the various tribes of Israel, we find, from verse 16, that Bethshemesh was one of the cities, with its suburbs, allotted to the priests, to the children of Aaron the priest; and we know that none but the immediate descendants of Aaron were allowed to touch this sacred vessel. (Num. iii. 31, iv. 1—15). The kine were, under the Divine guidance, led to take their sacred burden to a city whose inhabitants were authorised, by the Mosaic regulations, to take charge of it.

1013.—THE GRAPES OF ESHCOL.—*Num. xiii. 23.*

The following, which is taken from Luther, is a curious illustration of the method of spiritualising the Scripture narratives. “The bunch of grapes that the spies of the children of Israel carried from the land of promise was borne by two strong men upon a pole or staff. He that went before could not see the grapes, but he that was behind might both see and eat them. So the fathers, patriarchs, and prophets of the Old Testament did not, in like manner see the bunch of grapes, that was the Son of God made man, as they that came behind—the Evangelists, Apostles, and disciples, under the New Testament, both saw and tasted it, after that John had showed this grape, saying, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.’”

1014.—POURING OUT WATER WITH FASTING.—*1 Sam. vii. 6.*

The most simple explanation of this singular act of “drawing and pouring out water before the Lord” is (as compare Ezra x. 6), that the people signified their penitence before God, and their humiliation on account of sin, by refusing either to *drink* or to eat. To fast from drinking involved more serious suffering to them than abstinence from eating. The water was poured out “before the Lord” to signify that their abstaining was a *religious* act, an expression to God of their humiliation and their penitence. (See also No. 678.)

Other explanations are given; *e.g.*, “They poured out their heart in penitence as it were water.” It was a symbolical act expressing their ruin and helplessness, according to the saying of 2 Sam. xiv. 14. The waters represented their tears of sorrow. Poured on the ground, it typified their desire that their sins might be forgotten “as waters that pass away.” Some Rabbinical writers suggest that the water was used to detect idolaters, whose lips on drinking the water clave fast together.

INDICES.

In order that the contents of this whole work may be referred to at a glance, the following Indices have been made to cover and include BOTH THE VOLUMES, though a separate Index has been given at the end of Vol. I.

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